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Wild-card entry **Serena Williams, 44, will play 20-year-old Maya Joint** in the first round **at Wimbledon** for her first singles match in nearly 4 years, P 18

J D Vance calls it **'crazy' that Watergate scandal toppled Richard Nixon's presidency.** 'If Watergate happened tomorrow, it would be like a 12-hour news story,' US vice-president says, P 15

Abhishek Sharma's 19-ball 50 goes in vain as **Ireland etch a historic 34-run victory** in first T20I in Belfast. It is Ireland's **first ever victory over** reigning T20 world champions **India in any format**, P 18

Days after proposed Guwahati leg of Japan **PM Sanae Takaichi**'s India trip dropped, Tokyo announces she **will undertake 3-day visit**, her 1st official one to India, **from July 1-3** for annual summit with PM Modi

Top court recently declared walkable footpaths a fundamental right. In B'luru, where road construction defies both deadline and logic, **TOI** does a reality check in its new series, Walk-o-Meter. We start with Richmond Road, one of the city's oldest & rich in history, but now overrun by broken cobblestones, missing bollards, multiple trash mounds & dusty stretches. P 2

Walk-o-meter

8 in judicial custody over temple donation fraud

Buzz About Champat's Exit But No Clarity

Pankaj Shah, Pathikrit Chakraborty & Arshad Afzaal Khan | TNN

Lucknow/Ayodhya: Even as eight people accused of embezzling donations at Ram temple were sent to jail on Friday, there was confusion over resignations by VHP vice-president **Champat Rai** as general secretary and Anil Mishra as trustee of Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust.

VHP national spokesperson Vinod Bansal told **TOI** that the organisation had no information about Rai's resignation. There was no response from Rai and Mishra. Some reports said supporters of Rai and Mishra fanned "speculation" about their resignation.

Meanwhile, the eight people detained on Thursday night — Ramashankar Yadav, alias Tinnu, Anukalp Mishra, Avinash Shukla, Karunesh Pandey, Manish Yadav, Lavkush Mishra, Ram Shankar Mishra and Subhash Srivastava — were formally arrested in the morning and produced before a court in Ayodhya, which remanded them in judicial custody till Monday. Police also recovered almost Rs 80 lakh cash allegedly linked to the embezzled donation amount from all the accused, barring Subhash Srivastava.

▶Wider probe, P 14

'SILVER MISSING'

- UP CM Adityanath says **whoever tampers with people's faith will face consequences,** questions oppn's intent
- **Cong wants SC-monitored probe** into 'massive embezzlement', which, it claims, runs into thousands of crores
- Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut alleges 4kg silver brick donated by party has gone missing. **Uddhav Thackeray had also donated ₹1cr,** he says

Hidden cams, CCTV help nail accused

Hidden cameras inside the counting room and the scrutiny of CCTV footage played a pivotal role in revealing how donations were siphoned off, and identifying the eight accused, sources said. While visible CCTVs were in place, investigators found that some members of the counting staff had devised ways to exploit the blind spots. TNN

Venezuela twin earthquake toll jumps to 920

The death toll from twin earthquakes in Venezuela has risen to 920, with thousands injured and more than 50,000 people still unaccounted for. International rescue teams from countries, including India, Spain, Mexico and the United States, have joined search operations as families continue digging through rubble in Caracas and the worst-hit state of La Guaira. Authorities have declared a state of emergency, deployed military support and pledged reconstruction funds. The UN estimates up to 6.8 million people could be affected, while the US Geological Survey has warned that the final death toll could exceed 10,000. P 15

Triple murder: Key suspect's BF nabbed in Pondy

Bengaluru: Software professional **J Kenneth**, alleged boyfriend of Shwetha who's accused of murdering her parents and sister in Bengaluru Monday over a financial dispute, was arrested in Puducherry Thursday night. He has been remanded in 15-day police custody.

The duo had fled the city on a bike after the murders. After reaching Puducherry, Kenneth slept on the beach and spent time roaming around before he was nabbed from a liquor shop.

▶Nabbed after..., P 4

Homebuyers can seek relief for delay after possession: SC

Sets Aside NCDRC Order To Contrary

Amitanand.Choudhary @timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Taking possession of a flat would not bar homebuyers from raising complaints against real estate firms for deficiency in services, Supreme Court has held that homebuyers can approach consumer forums against developers to seek compensation for delayed possession even after taking custody of the flat.

SC set aside an order of National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC) which had held that a homebuyer ceases to be a consumer after taking possession of the flat and could not seek compensation for delay. It also held that the arbitration clause in homebuyer-real estate firm agreement would not block the former from approaching the consumer forum to raise grievances.

Twenty-two years after a homebuyer got possession of his flat housing project in Dwarka in NCR, SC allowed his plea to seek compensation for delay in handing over the flat. It said NCDRC's reasoning "cant be sustained".

"The appellant's complaint was not for delivery of possession simpliciter. His grievance was that there had been delay in handing over possession of the flat and that he was entitled to compensation for such delay. A claim for compensation for delayed possession necessarily arises from the period prior to the actual delivery of possession. The subsequent receipt of possession cannot, by itself, extinguish the right of the allottee to seek adjudication of a claim for compensation for the alleged delay," the bench said.

▶Revives '25 petition, P 14

IN THE COURTS

- K'taka HC says **law can't be used to criminalise consensual affection between adults,** orders release of 19-year-old jailed in rape case | P 2
- Bombay HC's Nagpur bench upholds Meta's decision to **suspend an influencer's Instagram a/c for allegedly sharing sexually explicit content with a minor** | P 13
- **Can't deny maintenance to wife for seeking divorce after harassment** and assault, says Bombay high court | P 13
- **Mumbai court says caretaker or help is not family,** orders man to vacate flat he's been occupying for a decade | P 13
- **₹2cr payout awarded to kin of woman whose healthy kidney was removed** in 2012 | P 20

IIT-Bombay's US sub-campus to start next year

IIT-Bombay's sub-campus in the US will come up at the State University of New York at Old Westbury on Long Island through a partnership. The collaboration was formalised by officials of the two institutions Friday. The first academic offerings are expected by 2027, with certificate programmes in AI sustainability and clean technology. P 8

Small plane crashes into Beijing highrise

A small plane seemed to have crashed into Beijing's tallest building Friday, with witnesses reporting debris at the skyscraper's base that "looked like part of a plane". A video on Chinese social media showed debris falling from the building. "I don't know why it would fly in here," said a witness. P 15

Justify dropping Adani charges: US judge

A US judge Friday ordered the Justice Dept to justify its decision to drop criminal charges against Gautam Adani, declining to rule immediately on his lawyers' request earlier in the week to formally dismiss the case regarding an alleged bribery scheme. REUTERS

2 UP sisters drown while saving bro, 12

Two teenage sisters drowned after rescuing their brother (12) from Ganga river in UP's Kasganj district Thursday, police said Friday. They were caught in the current and swept away, officers said. P 8

Names of 6 killed in Op Sindoor inscribed at Delhi War Memorial

Surendra.Singh @timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Centre has officially released the names of six service personnel killed during Operation Sindoor against Pakistan last year. Five of them served in Army and one in IAF: Subedar Major Pawan Kumar from Headquarters, 10 Infantry Brigade; Rifleman Sunil Kumar from 4th Battalion, J&K Light Infantry Regiment; Lance Naik Dinesh Kumar from 5 Field Regiment; Agniveer Mood Murali Naik from 851 Light Regiment; Havildar Sunil Kumar Singh from 237 Field Workshop; and Sergeant Surendra Kumar from 39 Wing of the IAF.

PTI

The names of four personnel

The names, inscribed on wall at Delhi's National War Memorial, were released alongside a list of all soldiers who made the sacrifice during various military operations in 2025. Two of the six were earlier conferred gallantry awards. Rifleman Sunil Kumar was posthumously awarded Vir Chakra, one of India's highest wartime bravery awards.

▶Sergeant honoured, P 14

K'taka CM firm on Bidadi project, blames HDK for farmers' protest

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Chief minister D K Shivakumar has ruled out any rollback of the proposed Bidadi township project despite farmer protests and calls for caution from senior Congress functionaries, sources in the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said.

The CM rejected demands to shelve the project, saying the govt would not yield to politically motivated protests. He accused JD(S) chief and Union minister H D Kumaraswamy, who had approved the project when he was the CM, of instigating farmers. He blamed HDK for playing politics over a sensitive issue.

Kumaraswamy has invited the CM to meet protesting farmers in Byramangala on Saturday.

▶Protesting farmers , P 4

BYV to go; Union min Somanna leads race?

After BJP's loss in successive bypolls since 2023 and cross-voting in recent council elections, the party is reportedly planning organisational shake-up, **reports Manu Aiyappa.** Sources claimed Union minister V Somanna may take over as state chief from BY Vijayendra. Somanna met BJP national chief Nitin Nabin on Thursday. P 6

Hospitals directed to make public their kidney transplant success rate

Anuja.Jaiswal@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Kidney transplant hospitals will now have to publish patient survival rates, deaths, graft failures and other long-term results, ending a system that left patients to choose where to undergo surgery without knowing how centres performed. National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation has directed transplant centres India to put the figures on their websites after BJP MP Captain Brijesh Chowta spotlighted lack of transparency on transplant outcomes. Hospitals have also been told to give patients and their kin details about the procedure, its risks and likely outcomes before taking consent.

▶Publish result, P 14

Manipur Naga grp turns down Kuki-Zo apology

Imphal: All Naga Students' Association, Manipur (Ansam) said no apology over the killing of six abducted Naga civilians can be accepted until those responsible are identified, arrested and punished under the law, **reports Donald Sairem.** It was responding to Kuki-Zo Council's statement expressing remorse and describing the incident as a "grave mistake" driven by emotion.

Ansam said their use of term 'Katcha Nagas' was profoundly offensive.

▶Seeks justice, P 14

Re 1 retains coining glory despite digital payment rise

Chennai: It will buy you a candy but not much else. The last time you probably searched for it may have been to settle a toss in a cricket match. Yet, despite a steady drop in its value, Re 1 remains the most widely circulated coin in the country, aided by the continued prevalence of odd-number pricing. In fact, it has dominated coin circulation for more than a decade, reports Yogesh Kabirdoss.

Data released in RBI's annual report 2025-26 shows there were nearly 5,499 crore Re 1 coins in circulation as of March 2026. The denomination accounted for 38.4% of total number of coins in circulation, which include 50 paise, Rs 2, Rs 5, Rs 10 and Rs 20. Its share stood at 39.3% in March 2025.

▶₹5 and ₹10 coins, P 17

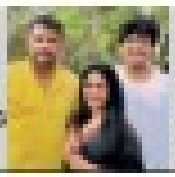
Bangalore Times

'Namaskara Kudla'

Shobhith Khan's emotional homecoming wins Mangaluru's heart

Buzzstop

DARSHAN'S WIFE VIJAYALAKSHMI CLARIFIES THAT THEIR SON 'AVA' IS NOT DRIVING THE CAR DURING THE ROAD ACCIDENT



I'm looking forward to my maternity break, says Samantha Ruth Prabhu

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Broken Footpaths, Construction Debris & Parked Vehicles Leave Little Space For Pedestrians

HOP, SKIP & FALL

Great Richmond Road Obstacle Course

Hamsaveni N & Sanjay Murty | TNN

If a hurdle race were to be held in the tech capital now, Richmond Road would qualify to provide the perfect turf. From displaced cobblestones to missing bollards, multiple trash mounds to dusty stretches, the nearly 2.7km arterial road in central Bengaluru — one of the oldest in the city — has all the hurdles an ordinary walker would dread.

Interestingly, the road is flanked by four major schools that draw thousands of students every day. It is dotted by churches and masjids along with scores of commercial establishments and office spaces. It was one of the first roads that got a facelift under TenderSURE, a project aimed at getting the urban road right on all fronts, including good footpaths. With complaints about the sordid state of footpaths on the rise, **The Times of India** team embarked on a reality check by walking for 1.3km from Richmond Circle to Shoolay Circle and D'Souza Circle (near Sacred Heart Church). What emerged was a shocker: there were at least 90 obstacles on the pavement, including debris and encroachments!

Pics: TOI

At several points, pedestrians were forced to step onto the main carriageway, risking being hit by a passing vehicle. The problems started at the beginning of Richmond Circle as the walkway was disrupted with damaged drain slabs, exposed electrical cables, and a heavy layer of dust caused by pipe-laying works being carried out for nearly a month.

Though pipeline-laying appeared to have been completed, excavated stretches had been hastily filled with gravel and loose stones, leaving uneven surfaces and debris that made walking unsafe.

Further ahead, construction materials, including jelly stones, sand, cement bags, concrete pipes, and loose manhole covers, occupied large portions of the footpath.

Garbage was another persistent concern — plastic waste, cigarette packets, gutka sachets, bottles, and silt lined several stretches. Broken paving blocks, sunken cobblestones, damaged drain covers, and partially open utility ducts added to the hazards. School and college students were forced to navigate the damaged pavements and dust.

On the return stretch from Shoolay Circle, a different problem emerged. Restaurants extended seating onto the pavement, scooters and autos occupied pedestrian space, while street vendors, food carts, and commercial spillovers left little room to walk on. In some places, bollards were intentionally removed and the pavement was used by delivery agents.

Many residents, who have stopped going for morning and evening walks, have appealed to local MLA NA Haris (also BDA chairman) to ensure the pipe-replacement work is completed at the earliest and the road is asphalted.

Walk-o-meter

2/5

From Richmond Circle to Shoolay Circle and D'Souza Circle

SAFETY (Poor)
Broken cobblestones, damaged drain covers, open drains and dangling utility cables create multiple hazards for pedestrians. On several stretches, parked scooters, abandoned bikes and other obstacles force walkers onto the carriageway, increasing their exposure to traffic

ACCESSIBILITY (Average)
The corridor serves several schools, colleges, offices and institutions, making it an important pedestrian route. The footpaths are generally wide and accessible, allowing a large number of students, office-goers and residents to use them daily

MAINTENANCE (Poor)
Several sections suffer from broken paving, damaged cobblestones, leaking sewage points, uncleared garbage and incomplete restoration following utility works. The lack of regular upkeep is evident

PACKED WITH PERIL: A **TOI** audit of Richmond Road found 90-plus obstacles on just 1.3km of footpath, forcing pedestrians into traffic amid garbage, encroachments and damaged pavements

OBSTRUCTIONS & HOW MANY

Garbage spots	19+
Broken footpath sections	18+
Manhole covers lying open/damaged	11
Wires (electric/ OFC/cable)	10+
Vehicle parking hotspots	8+
Barricades	7
Small open drains	5
Food carts	5
Huge cement pipes	4
Brick piles	3
Total: 90+	

Footpaths are definitely not in the right condition here. Many stretches are broken, which makes them dangerous, especially for senior citizens. There are hawkers occupying portions of footpaths, vehicles are parked on pedestrian space, and garbage is not cleared regularly. The whole idea of having walkable neighbourhoods is defeated when people are unable to use footpaths comfortably. We have been writing to GBA for the longest time, but there has been no improvement

Pratibha Panth | PRESIDENT, CWA OF RICHMOND AND LANGFORD TOWN

The condition of footpaths varies with locality. Though they are relatively better here, I feel uneasy while walking because of dog poop and two-wheeler riders. Garbage dumping on pavements is another issue

Chim Telesn | COMMUTER

I commute from Banashankari III Stage to my workplace on Magrath Road every day. I'm physically challenged and use the footpath to reach Richmond Town bus stop. I've learnt to take extra care when I'm walking and during rain, it becomes worse

Manjunath R | RESIDENT OF BSK III STAGE

Labourer electrocuted during Namma Metro lighting work

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: A labourer was electrocuted under the Namma Metro viaduct near Trinity Circle Friday afternoon. The deceased, Gurappa, 50, was employed by MR Electricals to execute Metro pillar lighting work between MG Road and Trinity Circle. The incident occurred near pillar 153, outside Trinity station.

DIGGING WORK TURNS FATAL

Gurappa allegedly came in contact with a live electric wire while carrying out earth pit excavation work. According to Ulsoor police, he was assigned to dig into the ground. Unaware of the presence of an underground electrical cable, he got to work, and when the machine came in contact with the live wire, he suffered a fatal electric shock. "We're yet to receive a complaint from his family members or other labourers. Based on their complaint, we'll register a case and take action," a cop said.

"During the course of work, the labourer came in contact with an electric source and sustained a shock. He was immediately shifted to the emergency ward of St Philomena's Hospital for treatment. However, he was declared dead on arrival at the hospital," BMRCL stated, adding that the exact cause of the incident was being ascertained through a detailed investigation.

Metal chain jammed train door: BMRCL

Namma Metro services on Purple Line were briefly disrupted Thursday evening after the doors of a train failed to close at Cubbon Park station, forcing BMRCL to get passengers to disembark and ask them to board subsequent trains.

Preliminary investigation found that a commuter's metal chain had got stuck in the train door guideway, preventing the doors from closing. Inspection found no technical fault in the train or its door systems.

The incident disrupted train services between 7.36pm and 7.54pm Thursday and had a ripple effect on services between Whitefield and Challaghatta.

BMRCL said all safety protocols were followed before the train was put back into service. TNN

Metro services at 4am today for BDA drive

To cater to people participating in a mega plantation drive and walkathon being organised by Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) Saturday at various locations across the city, BMRCL will commence Metro services at 4am from all terminals on all lines — one hour earlier than the regular Saturday start time.

"BMRCL encourages citizens to make use of these special early-morning services and actively participate in the BDA plantation drive and walkathon by utilising this safe, comfortable, and eco-friendly mode of transport. Passengers are requested to plan their journey accordingly," the press release stated. TNN

Kanakapura Road: GBA chief tells officials to fix garbage collection

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Bengaluru: Following the **TOI** report titled 'Kanakapura Road – A Walk Through Neglect,' published Friday highlighting mounting garbage and poor waste management along the stretch, civic authorities have moved to tighten waste collection and crack down on roadside dumping in Yelachenahalli.

Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) chief commissioner **Maheshwar Rao** inspected garbage-prone locations under Bengaluru South City Corporation (BSCC) Friday and directed officials to identify areas facing persistent garbage problems and deploy additional auto tippers during evening hours, wherever necessary, to ensure timely waste collection.

Rao noted that evening garbage collection by auto tippers had already begun in Yelachenahalli but stressed the need to strengthen services at chronic dumping hotspots. Reviewing the garbage transfer point near Yelachenahalli Lake, he instructed officials to maintain cleanliness at all times and take effective measures to prevent roadside dumping.

He also directed them to identify suitable vacant land and prioritise construction of a transfer station to provide a long-term solution to garbage issues in and around the locality. The commissioner appealed to residents to inform the corporation whenever garbage accumulates in neighbourhoods or when auto tippers fail to arrive on schedule, assuring them that civic staff would respond immediately. Emphasising that the city's garbage problem can be permanently resolved only through active public participation, he urged citizens to work in partnership with officials. Rao warned that strict penalties would be imposed on those found dumping garbage in public places.

Officials said greater public participation, improved waste collection infrastructure, and stricter enforcement are key to addressing recurring garbage challenges.

Court: Law cannot be tool to criminalise consensual affection

Vasantha.Kumar
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HIGH COURT OBSERVES

Criminal law, grave and solemn in operation, cannot be permitted to overshadow every relationship that fails to conform to familial approval or societal comfort

Bengaluru: Observing that criminal law should not be used to punish consensual relationships between adults, Karnataka high court has ordered the release of a 19-year-old boy jailed in a rape case and stayed proceedings against him pending before a city court.

Granting interim relief on June 23, Justice M Nagaprasanna said the case appeared to stem from a consensual relationship rather than violence or coercion. "A boy of 19 years confined within prison walls faces dangers far greater than those that await him outside," the judge noted while ordering his release. Relief granted to the boy and his family members will remain in force until July 30, the next date of hearing.

The boy and his relatives had approached the high court challenging an FIR registered by KR Pura police and the subsequent proceedings before the 29th additional chief metropolitan magistrate court. They contended that the criminal case arose solely because the boy was in a relationship with the complainant, also 19 years old.

The woman appeared before the high court and stated that the relationship was consensual and that both wished to marry each other. Recording her statement, the court said the question of permitting such a marriage could be considered at a later stage.

In his order, Justice Nagaprasanna observed that the circumstances leading to the boy's incarceration did not arise from "violence, coercion or predation" but from "the tender and often turbulent realm of youthful affection".

"What began as a bond of mutual affection between two young adults has, unfortunately, spiralled into criminal proceedings, drawing not merely the boy but even members of his family into prosecution," the judge said.

The court further noted that, prima facie, there was no material suggesting force, coercion, compulsion or sexual assault by the boy. "The material placed before this court would, at least at this stage, indicate nothing more than a consensual relationship between two individuals who have both attained the age of majority," the judge observed. He added that while the law must protect vulnerable individuals, it should not be invoked to criminalise consensual relationships between adults merely because they do not meet familial expectations or societal approval.

Pigmy collector suffers head injuries as tree branch falls

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: A pigmy collector sustained severe head injuries after a branch of a mahogany tree fell on him while he was travelling at Rajajinagar, west Bengaluru.

SK Suresh, 53, who works with Raghavendra Finance Company, fell unconscious on the road Wednesday as the branch suddenly snapped and struck him on the head. Locals shifted the Nagawara resident to ESI Hospital, where he received first aid. Doctors later referred him to a private hospital in Yeshwantpur for specialised treatment owing to the severity of his injuries.

Screengrabs

SK Suresh, 53, fell to the road as the branch struck him on the head

Officials said forest department personnel and medical authorities visited the hospital, where doctors performed emergency surgery. On Thursday, a second surgery was carried out after blood clotting was detected in a portion of the brain. Suresh remains under treatment in the intensive care unit, sources said.

The incident was brought to the attention of Bengaluru west zone authorities and the office of Rajajinagar MLA S Suresh Kumar. Officials noted that dry and dead branches along the stretch had been cleared on June 3 as part of routine maintenance work.

Footpath encroachments to be cleared in East zone from July 1

Bengaluru: Bengaluru East City Corporation has announced a footpath encroachment-clearance drive covering some of the city's busiest roads, including Old Madras Road, ITPL Main Road, Sarjapur Main Road, Hoodi-Ayyappanagar Main Road, Horamavu-K Narayanapura Road, AECS Main Road, Outer Ring Road, Whitefield Main Road, and EPIP area. The drive will begin on July 1, with the first phase scheduled for completion by July 10.

SPL ACTION PLAN

The decision was taken at a review meeting chaired by commissioner DS Ramesh with engineering officials. He directed officials to prepare a special action plan to remove unauthorised encroachments such as roadside kiosks, temporary sheds, pushcarts, canopies, barricades, advertisement boards and other structures obstructing footpaths to ensure safe and uninterrupted movement for pedestrians. TNN

Dye another way: Scientists create hues from microbes

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Bengaluru: What began as a curiosity-driven experiment by two city scientists to grow colour-producing microbes on fabric has evolved into a breakthrough that could transform the textile industry's relationship with dyes.

Intrigued by the vibrant pigments naturally produced by certain microorganisms, the researchers explored ways to extract and stabilise these colours, eventually developing a sustainable textile dye. The innovation comes at a critical time, as synthetic dyes used by the textile industry remain among the largest contributors to water pollution, releasing harmful chemicals into rivers and lakes.

Although natural dyes derived from plants and minerals are considered environmentally friendly, their limited availability and scalability have prevented them from meeting the growing demands of the textile sector. It is this challenge that prompted Suchitha Raghunathan and Anjana Badrinarayanan of Microbeworks, a Bengaluru-based bio-startup, to search for alternatives. Their early-stage innovation has now earned them the prestigious Global Change Award from H&M Foundation, often referred to as the 'Nobel Prize of the fashion industry.'

"An academician from the field of fashion technology approached us with the idea of growing bacteria directly on fabric for colouring purposes. While exploring the concept, we wondered why not extract pigment from the bacteria and convert it into a dye that is both safe for humans and environmentally sustainable," explained Suchitha, who led the research. "We also realised it would be nearly impossible to meet the growing demand for natural colours solely through the cultivation of dye-producing plants. Microorganisms, on the other hand, grow rapidly and require very little space, making them a practical alternative."

Anjana said the team's vision extends beyond textiles. "We envision a world where the colours we use in our lives do not leave a lasting impact on the planet," she said.

Using their laboratory facilities, the researchers cultivated microorganisms capable of producing coloured pigments. Through fermentation and process optimisation, they successfully developed a high-performance blue dye. "We identified microbes that naturally produce colour and refined the fermentation process to obtain a stable, high-quality blue dye. These microorganisms are non-pathogenic, pose no threat to humans, and have a short life cycle. The resulting colour has a natural appearance and gives fabrics an aesthetically pleasing finish," Suchitha explained. She added that a wide range of colours could potentially be produced by cultivating different microorganisms.

Although research is continuing to expand the colour palette and improve extraction techniques, the scientists say the cost of cultivating and fermenting these microorganisms is comparable to that of growing dye-producing plants.

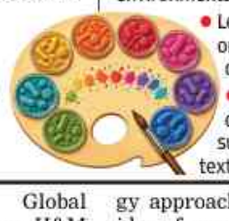
"In fact, microbial dyes can save space, time and resources, making them a more viable option than plant-based dyes. They have the potential to steer the fashion industry towards a circular and environmentally sustainable future by reducing water consumption, toxic effluents, and the overall environmental footprint associated with synthetic, petrochemical-based dyes," Suchitha said.

Pics: TOI

LAB TO LOOM: Bioscientists have developed textile dye from microbes, offering a scalable alternative to synthetic dyes

Looking beyond blue

- Current breakthrough is blue dye
- Different microorganisms can produce different colours
- Researchers are expanding colour palette
- Future cultivation may use organic substrates such as paddy straw

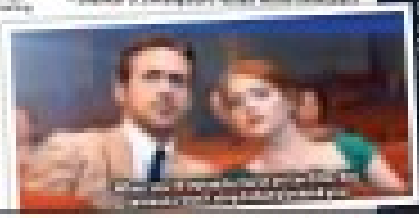


Environmental impact

- Lower water consumption
- Reduced toxic effluents
- Leaves smaller environmental footprint
- Less dependence on petrochemical dyes
- Supports circular and sustainable textile economy

Early morning or midday shows

The secret to a better theatre experience



The OG Avengers squad to assemble with a new name

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A chaotic comedy adventure that delivers ample laughs

Alcock brings heart, hurt and humanity to a terrific Supergirl

An authentic story with lack of originality

An intriguing relationship drama lost in a maze of twists and turns

Crypto theft case: Two suspects' bail pleas rejected

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: A special anti-corruption court rejected the bail petitions of two suspects in connection with a cryptocurrency theft case.

Sunish Hegde, who is in jail, applied for regular bail, while Prasidh Shetty, alleged beneficiary in the case, sought anticipatory bail.

In the first week of June, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) arrested Srikrishna alias Sriki, Shetty and Robin Khandelwal in connection with the multicrore cryptocurrency money laundering and hacking case. However, Sriki and Khandelwal did not apply for bail. Shetty applied for anticipatory bail since he was a beneficiary in the case, sources said.

According to special public prosecutor Madhu N Rao, ED documents revealed a sophisticated cyber extortion, hacking and money laundering operation targeting major online poker platforms. The probe, conducted under Prevention of Money Laundering Act, names hacker Sriki and his close associate Hegde as central figures who allegedly netted crores from digital extortion games and compromised databases.

Arguing before the special court, Rao explained, "The accused persons hacked corporate websites and digital wallets to steal virtual digital assets (VDAs), proprietary data and funds. Stolen VDAs were liquidated and routed through mainstream crypto trading platforms. The syndicate used compromised site data to directly extort money from the victims' businesses. Proceeds from the extortion and crypto sales were layered through multiple bank accounts and trading platforms before being spent on luxury lifestyles."

He added Sriki and associates earned crores of rupees by hacking gaming websites.

"An FIR was originally registered on Dec 23, 2020, at Bengaluru city cyber police station regarding the hacking of the PokerSaint website. Soon, cops arrested prime suspect Sriki," said the prosecutor, quoting from the chargesheet.

School van door opens, four fall off

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Four schoolgirls reportedly fell onto the road after the tailgate of their moving van accidentally opened up at Gayathri Layout in KR Pura Thursday afternoon. They escaped with minor injuries.

DRIVER BOOKED

Police booked the Maruti Suzuki Omni driver, Sarvesh Kumar, for rash and negligent driving on public ways and under provisions of Motor Vehicles Act.

Investigation revealed there were no proper documents for the vehicle and it was not insured.

The complaint was filed by Babu JR, administrator of Amara Jyothi School, Basavanapura, KR Pura.

"Sarvesh Kumar was taking around nine schoolchildren back home from Amara Jyothi School. While travelling on 9th Cross around 3.30pm Thursday, the back door of the Omni suddenly opened, throwing the four girls onto the road. They escaped with minor scratch injuries. We demand legal action against Sarvesh Kumar for his negligent attitude," Babu's complaint stated.

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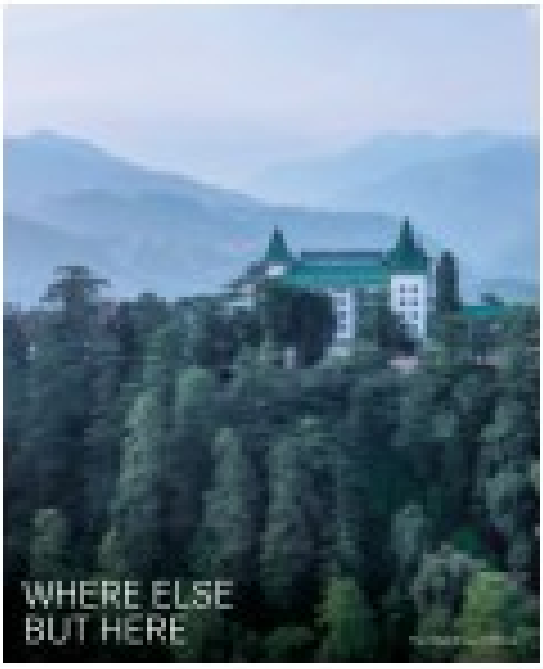

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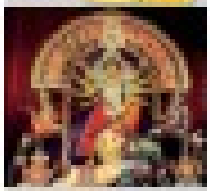

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Bangalore Times Fashion Week

Day 2 Schedule

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Forest dept splits Cauvery sanctuary to manage human-elephant conflict

CM's Home Turf Kanakapura To Host New Wildlife Division With B'lore South

Niranjan.Kaggere @timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: The battle for Kanakapura, the home turf of chief minister DK Shivakumar, is no longer confined to politics. It is unfolding across the taluk's farms and plantations, where frequent elephant incursions have intensified human-wildlife conflict. Struggling to contain the crisis through conventional measures, forest department has turned to an unusual solution: redrawing Karnataka's elephant management landscape.

In a first for the state, the department has carved out key human-elephant conflict hotspots from the sprawling Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary, which spans three districts, and brought them under the closer oversight of Bengaluru South (Ramanagara) territorial division, with Kanakapura serving as the headquarters of the newly created wildlife division. The rationale behind the move is simple: if elephants do not recognise administrative boundaries, forest management must be aligned with their movement patterns.

As part of the restructuring, Kanakapura wildlife division will comprise Mugguru, Sangama and Halaguru ranges spread across Kanakapura and Malavalli taluks. The division will be headed by a deputy conservator of forests (DCF). The govt has directed the department to establish a dedicated office in Kanakapura.

As conflict incidents have risen sharply in Kanakapura, Channapatna and Kabbalu, much of the authority to address them has remained with Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary administration headquartered in distant Kollegal in Chamarajanagar district.

An official said the move would place a vast and interconnected elephant habitat under a more responsive administrative structure.

"Bengaluru South district has around 46,000 hectares of forest area. Nearly 24,000 hectares of Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary fall within Kanakapura taluk, while another 26,000 hectares are linked through Bannerghatta landscape. Together, this creates a contiguous forest stretch of over 90,000 hectares. Bringing these areas under a unified management framework will enable quicker decision making and more effective monitoring of elephant movement," the official pointed out.

Officials noted the sanctuary connects forest corridors stretching towards Malavalli on one side and Tamil Nadu on the other, allowing elephants to move freely across districts. "The challenge is that elephants removed from conflict-prone villages are often driven into sanctuary areas, only to return through adjoining forest tracts and resume crop raids. Managing such a mobile population requires seamless coordination and a landscape-level approach rather than fragmented administration," another official said.

MOVE WILL CREATE CONFUSION, SAYS ACTIVIST

The restructuring has drawn criticism from wildlife activists. A wildlife activist from Bengaluru South argued that the move may be driven more by the prospect of increased funding for mitigation measures such as rail fencing, elephant-proof trenches and solar fences. "The focus should be on strengthening coordination between existing agencies. Splitting the sanctuary's administration could complicate wildlife management."

Gas supply normal, but your food bill may not ease for now

Sanjay.Murty@timesofindia.com

LG Kumar, secretary of Karnataka Circle of All India LPG Distributors' Federation, said issuance of new domestic LPG connections, which was suspended during the supply crunch, is expected to resume from July 1

Bengaluru: City residents are unlikely to get immediate relief from restaurant price hikes despite the restoration of commercial LPG supply to pre-Iran war levels. Hoteliers say they are in no position to roll back menu prices as commercial gas continues to remain expensive even though supply has normalised.

Restaurants across Bengaluru raised menu prices over the past three months, citing a steep increase in commercial LPG prices and state govt's revised minimum wage as the key reasons.

Bengaluru Hotels' Association secretary Veerendra Kamat said the restaurants would consider reducing menu prices only if there is a substantial reduction in LPG prices. "While supply has been normalised, commercial LPG rates remain high. The price has increased by over Rs 1,000 between March and June," he said.

According to Kamat, the reduction expected from July 1 is unlikely to make a meaningful difference. "As per the information we have received, price will be reduced by not more than Rs 200 per cylinder from July 1. We can reduce menu prices only if cylinder rates come down by at least Rs 600," he added.

However, Karnataka State Hotels' Association (KSHA) president GK Shetty said the association will encourage hoteliers to pass on any benefit from lower LPG prices to consumers. "We will request our members and other hoteliers across the state to reduce prices by at least Rs 5-10 so that consumers also benefit from the reduction in LPG rates," he said.

LPG distributors confirmed that supply has returned to normal after weeks of restrictions. LG Kumar, secretary of Karnataka Circle of All India LPG Distributors' Federation, said distributors have been receiving adequate supplies for nearly a month. "Supply has returned to normal. We learnt that ships arriving from countries such as the US and Venezuela are unable to unload their stock. We now have sufficient reserves," he said.

Distributors, however, do not expect a sharp reduction in commercial LPG prices immediately. They said they have been informed that prices may come down by only around Rs 30 per cylinder from July 1. "If the Strait of Hormuz opens up completely, prices could fall further. Crude oil prices have already dropped from around $110 to $76 per barrel. Earlier, LPG prices had risen due to higher insurance costs for ships travelling through the conflict zone," he said.

Monsoon delayed, but B'luru has water for 4-5 months: BWSSB chief

Sanjay.Murty@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Even though southwest monsoon has been delayed this year, the city's residents need not worry about water shortage for next four to five months, according to Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) chairperson **N Manjula**.

After assessing the city's water preparedness amid concerns over below-normal rainfall, she told **TOI**: "The delayed monsoon is expected to pick up in July and replenish reservoirs."

Bengaluru requires nearly 2.3 tmc of water every month, while the combined storage in Krishna Raja Sagar (KRS) and Kabini reservoirs currently exceeds 10 tmc, ensuring adequate supplies in the near term.

To strengthen long-term planning, the BWSSB chief directed officials to monitor groundwater levels across the city and instructed senior engineers to obtain a comprehensive report from Indian Institute of Science (IISc) on Bengaluru's groundwater status and functioning of existing borewells. "IISc is monitoring groundwater levels through observation wells. If groundwater depletion is detected, we will have to identify new locations to augment groundwater sourcing. Nothing alarming has been reported as of now," she said.

She urged citizens to use water responsibly. "Residents should avoid using BWSSB water for washing doorsteps, gardening and other non-essential activities. Those with access to borewell water can use it for such purposes," she further added.

Needed for...

- Drinking & cooking: 5-10 litres
- Bathing: 30-60 L
- Toilet flushing: 20-40 L
- Laundry, utensils and cleaning: 30-50 L

Ways to save

- Fix leaks immediately
- Install aerators on taps
- Shorter showers & use buckets
- Harvest rainwater & reuse greywater

12-year-old tigress shifted to B'ghatta

A 12-year-old tigress that had been killing cattle in Kundakere Range of Bandipur Tiger Reserve walked into a cage trap Friday. It has been shifted to Bannerghatta National Park in Bengaluru. Foresters said the tigress was old and unable to hunt in the forest, and had taken shelter near the village, where it killed cattle. TNN

Farmer's suicide sparks protest

Tension prevailed in Malavalli town of Mandya district Friday after the family of a farmer who allegedly died by suicide staged a protest outside a private microfinance firm, accusing it of harassment over loan repayment.

The deceased, Nagaraju, 35, was a resident of Tagadaiahanadoddi village.

Family said Nagaraju had borrowed Rs 5 lakh from the microfinance company to invest in sericulture. Due to agricultural losses, he couldn't repay the instalments. Unable to cope with the alleged harassment by company representatives, he reportedly consumed poison near his farm land and died. His relatives later brought the body to the microfinance office and staged a demonstration. TNN

REMEMBERING HOLY SACRIFICE

Muthu P

Muslims gathered in large numbers near Johnson Market on Hosur Road for a procession on the occasion of Muharram Friday. The holy day of Ashura Muharram is observed to mourn the martydom of Imam Hussein, grandson of Prophet Muhammad

K'taka restores full tiger safaris at Bandipur and Nagarahole

Niranjan.Kaggere @timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Nearly four months after partially resuming tiger safaris at Bandipur and Nagarahole, the Karnataka govt Friday restored operations to their pre-ban format after accepting an expert committee report.

CM DK Shivakumar said safari operations will resume in accordance with the expert committee's recommendations. Sources in the CM's secretariat told **TOI** the panel, comprising wildlife scientists and senior forest officials, submitted its report after scientifically assessing the impact of safari operations. "Directions have been issued to operate jungle safari in a regulated manner, in line with the committee's recommendations," a statement from the chief minister's office said.

The state had partially reopened tiger safaris at Bandipur and Nagarahole on Feb 20 after imposing a blanket ban in Nov 2025. Then forest minister Eshwar Khandre had restricted safaris to four to six hours a day, depending on the carrying capacity of each reserve.

File photo

ON A WILD TOUR

While Friday's announcement also states that safari operations will continue in a "regulated manner", it does not specify whether the earlier restrictions on operating hours or visitor limits will remain in force.

Though the Supreme Court has permitted safari and eco-tourism activities in up to 20% of a tiger reserve, Karnataka has limited it to 10% or less of reserve's area.

Online, offline bookings for safaris allowed

In a relief for tourists, govt has decided to continue both online and offline bookings for safari rides. A fraction of total available visitor slots will be kept aside for walk-in visitors. "About 80% of safari bookings will be made online, while 20% will be reserved for offline or walk-in tourists that will be allotted on first-come-first-served basis," a senior forest department official said.

Safari operations at Bandipur and Nagarahole will continue to be managed by forest department and state-run Jungle Lodges and Resorts (JLR). "JLR will operate safaris for its in-house guests and visitors staying at private resorts, while forest department will cater to bookings made on the website," another official added.

Avoid roads near Kanteerava stadium tomorrow

Bengaluru: With 'Drug-free India' programme being organised at Kanteerava Indoor Stadium Sunday, which will be attended by vice-president CP Radhakrishnan, traffic police requested commuters to avoid Seshadri Road, Nrupathunga Road, KG Road, KB Road, Vittal Mallya Road and RRMR Road.

Vehicles can be parked at St Joseph's High School Ground, Freedom Park multi-level car parking and gate no. 4, Palace Grounds. TNN

Kenneth nabbed after he exited wine store

▶ Continued from page 1

After Shwetha was arrested from the Union territory Wednesday, Bengaluru police contacted their Puducherry counterparts and shared his photographs and videos on strong leads that he, too, might be holed up in the same city.

After nearly 36 hours of continuous monitoring of all public places, including beach and temples, a police team zeroed in on a wine store where a young man was at a table alone. His description matched details shared by Bengaluru police. Puducherry assistant sub-inspector Ramalingam said they waited until the youth exited the store and surrounded him after a short distance. "We blocked and detained him," he said.

"Kenneth attempted to escape. In the melee, he assaulted Ramalingam and others. However, police overpowered him. After confirming it was Kenneth, we informed Bengaluru police late night," an investigating officer said.

After the triple murders, Kenneth and Shwetha fled the city on a bike and rode till Tiruvannamalai, 200km away, on Tuesday. After the two-wheeler broke down, they boarded different buses to Puducherry. The bike has been recovered from Tiruvannamalai.

HDK hopes CM will meet protesting farmers today

▶ Continued from page 1

Shivakumar's reported stand came despite Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee president BK Hariprasad and home minister Priyank Kharge indicating that the project could be given a second thought if farmers continued to oppose land acquisition.

Deputy CM G Parameshwara also hinted at a similar party stand, stressing that land would be acquired only with farmers' consent. "There is no point in forcibly evicting farmers to build the township," Parameshwara added.

Meanwhile, Kumaraswamy softened his stand, saying he had no objection to the township if farmers voluntarily agreed to part with their land. He said he hoped Shivakumar would accept his invitation to meet the protesting farmers at Byramangala Saturday.

Sources said the CM believes projects such as the Peripheral Ring Road cannot become a reality without large-scale land acquisition.

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- Conferred Doctor of Science (D.Sc), RGUHS
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- Fmr. President of Federation of Operative Dentistry of India

Last rituals will be held on 27.06.2026 at 11:30 AM
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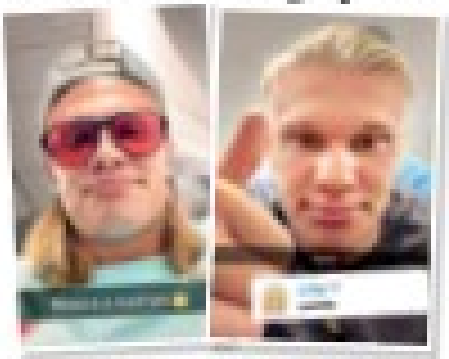
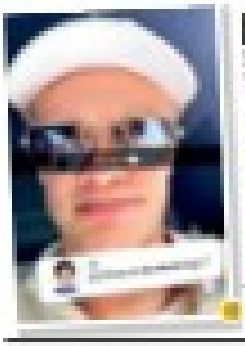
The only thing hotter than the front row? Paris itself

As Congo kicks off a record-breaking heatwave, fashion fugitives are swarming the snowy retreat

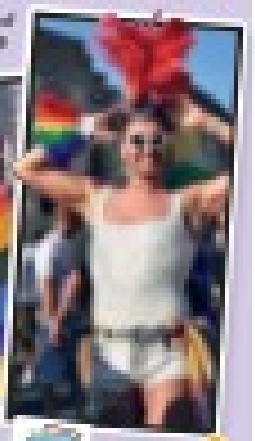
Haaland's unfiltered Snapchat is giving fans a backstage pass





Around the world, Pride marches on

From Rome to Washington, city streets burst into vivid colour as members of the LGBTQ+ community turned out in full force for Pride parades, celebrating identity, inclusivity, and self-expression in their most vibrant possibilities



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Spot these six types of people at every fashion show

Bangalore Times Fashion Week is back this weekend. But, beyond the catwalk, fashion shows are also about a mix of people who bring the crowd to life. From trend hunters to front-row attendees, here's a guide to the quirks we always see in real

The Instant Creator:

The Social Butterfly:

The Trend Hunter:

The Industry Insider:

The Celebrity Spotter:

The Curious First Timer:

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SHORT TAKE

Safety barricades soon at Muthathi

Water resources minister **Ramalinga Reddy** has directed officials to strengthen safety measures along the Cauvery river, a development that comes in the wake of five members of a family drowning at Muthathi in Mandya district. Reddy, also minister in charge of the district, spoke to Mandya deputy commissioner over the phone and instructed the district administration to take immediate steps to prevent such tragedies from recurring. He directed officials to identify a designated swimming zone in the river, install barricades around the area, and erect signages marking it as a safe swimming zone. Reddy instructed officials to strictly prohibit swimming outside the designated area. He also suggested deploying guides or safety personnel at vulnerable locations' to monitor visitors and enhance public safety.

ROUTINE MEETING: Former CM Siddaramaiah and Congress state president BK Hariprasad met in Bengaluru Friday

Cross-voting Will it cost Vijayendra prez post? Somanna waits in wings

ManuAiyappa.Kanathanda
@timesofindia.com

Pics: TOI

CHANGING COURSE? V Somanna with BJP president Nitin Nabin in Delhi. (Right) BY Vijayendra with party legislators and Dakshina Kannada MP at Sri Manjunatha Temple in Dharmasthala on Friday

Bengaluru: What began as an embarrassing incident of cross-voting in the recent legislative council election appears to have snowballed into a leadership churn in the state unit of BJP, with the party's high command said to be weighing organisational changes that could include replacing state president BY Vijayendra.

Union minister V Somanna met BJP national president Nitin Nabin Thursday, fuelling a buzz that he could be entrusted with leading the Karnataka unit soon.

It is said Vijayendra's position was already under review following a string of electoral setbacks, and the cross-voting incident — where at least four BJP MLAs are believed to have voted for Congress candidates — has become a tipping point.

Rather than treating it as an isolated breach of discipline, central brass appears to be viewing the incident as a sign of deeper organisational issues and an inability to keep the legislative party united.

The developments come at a difficult phase for BJP in Karnataka. Since losing the 2023 elections, the party has struggled to regain momentum, with Congress wining all five bypolls since then. This has intensified questions within BJP over leadership, coordination, and party strategy.

The cross-voting controversy has also revived criticism within sections of BJP over Vijayendra's style of functioning. Some party colleagues have again raised allegations of "adjustment politics" with chief minister DK Shivakumar, an accusation Vijayendra rejected Friday after offering prayers at Dharmasthala. He insisted that he had neither personal nor business ties with Shivakumar and that any cordiality towards the CM was only out of respect for the constitutional office.

Discussion on for sometime

Political analyst MN Patil said the latest episode had only hastened an ongoing debate. "The leadership question was under discussion for some time. Cross-voting has provided a trigger. Whether it results in an immediate change depends on the larger political strategy," he said.

Those backing Somanna say he has emerged as the frontrunner as he is seen as a consensus builder capable of bridging factional divides. His standing with central party brass is believed to have strengthened after accepting politically challenging assignments, including contesting against Siddaramaiah from Varuna in the 2023 assembly election before returning to Parliament from Tumakuru in the 2024 Lok Sabha election. His administrative experience and long political career are also viewed as key strengths.

Can't ignore BSY factor

But supporters of Vijayendra argue that sidelining the BS Yediyurappa family could prove costly. They point out that BJP's earlier attempt to project Basavaraj Bommai as the party's principal face did not yield electoral success. "The party cannot afford to ignore the Yediyurappa factor. I don't think the leadership will experiment with Somanna, who is seen by many as being too senior for a long-term organisational role," a functionary said.

Sources say that if Somanna is chosen as state president, BY Raghavendra, Vijayendra's brother and Shivamogga MP, could be considered for a berth in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's cabinet during the upcoming cabinet reshuffle, a move that would help balance interests of the influential Yediyurappa camp.

> Following the cross-voting incident, rumours were spread about my relationship with DK Shivakumar. Even some from my own party contributed to these rumours. Standing in this sacred place, I state that I have not engaged in any 'adjustment politics,' and my conscience is clear. I have prayed for the well-being of those who spread falsehoods against me
>
> **BY Vijayendra** | KARNATAKA BJP PRESIDENT

BY THE BOOK: Chief minister DK Shivakumar with finance department officials ahead of a review meeting at Vidhana Soudha on Friday

Curb GST evasion, DKS tells officials

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: With an eye on Karnataka becoming the state with the highest GST growth this financial year, CM DK Shivakumar directed commercial taxes department officials to crack down on tax evasion while ensuring honest taxpayers are treated with dignity.

At a review meeting Friday, Shivakumar said Karnataka had achieved 9% GST growth up to May 2026, second only to Telangana's 10%, while outperforming Uttar Pradesh (8%), Tamil Nadu (7%), Maharashtra (5%) and Gujarat (5%).

"The responsibility of implementing the suggestions made by the finance department rests on all of you," he told officials, asking them to find ways to take Karnataka to the top position. "I have full faith that you will strive to exceed targets."

He directed officials to ensure that no goods vehicle enters the state without proper documents and said there should be "no scope for tax evasion" at border checkposts. He warned that he was closely monitoring the department's functioning and negligence would be penalised.

Shivakumar also asked staff to share intelligence with other states and hold joint enforcement operations to curb GST fraud. He said the department had data on nearly 12 lakh taxpayers and should use technology to detect evasion. He asked officials to intensify legal action against fake companies and increase arrests in fraud cases.

Warning to excise officials

Shivakumar also warned officials of the excise department that the govt would amend the law and transfer them to other departments if they tarnished its image. Reviewing the department's performance, he said professionalism and integrity were essential to protect the credibility of both the department and the govt. "If you damage the govt's image, we will not remain silent," he said.

He said 574 new licences would be put up for e-auction.

CM banks on new dept to cut grievances

Santoshkumar.B@timesofindia

Bengaluru: In one of the most significant changes in Karnataka's public grievance system in recent years, the govt has launched the newly created Prajaseva department, a first-of-its-kind initiative, designed to bring public grievance redressal and citizen services under a single administrative umbrella

Approved by the cabinet last week and formally notified Wednesday, the govt hopes to quickly resolve the thousands of petitions, memorandums and requests that land on desks of ministers, MLAs and govt offices across Karnataka.

The department is expected to become the central point to receive complaints, track applications, and ensure issues raised by citizens reach the right authorities and are acted upon within a defined timeframe.

- Rather than build a fresh bureaucracy, the govt has redeployed existing manpower
- Prajaseva department comprise 121 personnel

This includes 73 regular employees & 48 contractual and consultancy staff

- The team includes IT professionals & district-level support personnel

The move reflects chief minister DK Shivakumar's push to make governance more accessible and responsive. Instead of citizens approaching multiple departments for solutions, the new department will coordinate with departments and agencies and improve accountability.

"The Prajaseva department will review applications, collect relevant information from departments concerned and work towards ensuring timely justice for citizens," Shivakumar said.

Several existing citizen-focused initiatives such as administrative reforms, e-governance programmes and Sakala Mission will now function under the new department. It will also oversee Janaspandana and Sakala, two flagship programmes aimed at improving public access to govt services.

Drive govt processes

The department has also been tasked with driving 'government business process reengineering' initiatives. The objective is to simplify procedures, reduce bureaucratic delays, and use technology to make service delivery faster and more transparent.

The initiative also seeks to strengthen accountability at the district level. Shivakumar said ministers in charge of districts will be required to visit at least one assembly constituency every week and hold Jana Samparka meetings with local MLAs, hear grievances directly from citizens and monitor follow-up action.

For the govt, the department represents more than an administrative reshuffle. It is an attempt to create a single window through which citizens can seek solutions and track responses, while departments are pushed to resolve issues faster and with greater transparency.

Govt accelerates recruitment drive

Deputy chief minister **G Parameshwara** said the govt has accelerated the process to fill 72,186 vacant govt posts, reaffirming Congress' election promise to fill 2.5 lakh posts in a phased manner. He said the recruitment drive had been delayed due to several factors, especially internal reservation. He said the issue has now been resolved. He also said officials across departments, including revenue, have been directed to issue recruitment notifications without delay. He said senior IAS officers Uma Mahadevan and Gaurav Gupta have been made supervisory officers to ensure the process is completed on time.

Dispute deepens with parallel protests

Times News Network

Bengaluru: The controversy over the proposed Bidadi township project took a fresh turn, with rival groups of farmers holding parallel protests while the political confrontation between Congress and JD(S) rose another notch.

BIDADI TOWNSHIP

A section of farmers opposing the township has been protesting for over 400 days, alleging that the project would lead to loss of agricultural land and livelihoods. However, over the past couple of days, another group has launched a counter protest supporting the township, arguing that it would generate employment, attract investments, and improve infrastructure in the region.

PTI

HUNG OUT TO DRY: A farmer works on her produce at Bannigere village in Bidadi

Attention is now focused on Union minister HD Kumaraswamy, who said he would visit the protest site at Byramangala village Saturday to express solidarity with farmers opposing the project. Kumaraswamy said he would wait there for CM DK Shivakumar, raising the possibility of a meeting between the two.

Shivakumar had invited Kumaraswamy for discussions at Vidhana Soudha, but the Union minister twice urged the CM to visit the protest site instead, insisting discussions should be held in the presence of farmers who would be affected.

Congress steps up attack

Meanwhile, Congress stepped up its attack on JD(S), accusing it of politicising the issue. The party challenged Kumaraswamy to produce evidence to support his allegations against Shivakumar, and sought explanations regarding his family's assets, land holdings and financial transactions.

MUNICIPAL CORPORATION CHANDIGARH

TENDER NOTICE

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Bid Submission Schedule (Online)	Opening Technical Bid (Online)
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER - Roads Division No. 1			
1.	Re construction Of Streets Using 80mm Thick Paver Blocks Adjoining To Library and Neelam Hotel and Various Other Streets Inside Village Burail, Chandigarh. (Re-invite). Capital Head : Infrastructure facilities in village/ area merged under MCC. Est. Cost : Rs.155.75 Lacs EMD : Rs. 3,11,508/- Time Limit : 08 Months	27.06.2026 To 06.07.2026 upto 12.00 noon	06.07.2026 at 12.00 noon
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER - M.C.P.H. Division No. 4			
2.	Desilting, Rehabilitation & Strengthening of existing 38" x 57" CBD Sewer Line with Structure lining (CIPP Liner) at V3 Road Sector 45/46 in Chandigarh (Ch to: AMRUT 2.0) Approximate Amount : Rs. 8,39,98,820/- EMD : Rs. 16,79,976/- Time Limit : 06 Months	29.06.2026 To 13.07.2026 at 11:30 A.M.	13.07.2026 at 03:30 P.M.

Note :- All other terms and conditions and complete DNIT including Corrigendum are uploaded on website https://etenders. chd.nic.in.

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
Roads Division No.1, Room No.304, M.C. Chandigarh (O) 0172-5021626 and
M.C.P.H. Division No. 4, New Deluxe Building, Room No.410, 4th Floor, Sector-17, Chandigarh

CHITTARANJAN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS

OPEN E-TENDER

No. COS/CRJ/PUB/e-Tender/19/0162, Date: 24/06/2026. The following **e-Tenders** can be accessed under the link **www.ireps.gov.in**. Offers for such e-Tender can be submitted only electronically by accessing the link **www.ireps.gov.in → login → E-Tender Stores/Supply.** Vendors may also contact the following officials to obtain clarification regarding tender or IREPS related information if any. Dy. CMM/M-II/CLW/Chittaranjan, 9163340708 or AMM/M, 9163340706. **Office Address:** Office of The PCMM /CLW/ Chittaranjan. **Sl. No.: [1]. Tender No.: 75264135. Brief Description of Item:** Sand Box Assembly, As Per Drg. No.1209-01.138-031 ALT-10. **[Warranty Period:** 30 Months after the date of delivery]. **Quantity: 7457.00 Nos. Earnest Money Deposit (Rupees):** ₹622810.00. **Tender Closing Date & Time (IST): 20/07/2026 at 11:00 AM.**

PRS/400 PCMM/CLW/Chittaranjan

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RajCOMP Info Services Limited (RISL)
C-Block, 1st Floor, Yojana Bhawan, Tilak Marg, C-Scheme, Jaipur

RISL invites e-bids from the eligible bidders for the following:

NIB No./ Date/ Unique bid no.	Particulars	Estimated Cost	Start of sale / Last date
ML-287/ 23.06.2026/ RJS2627 WLOB00033	RFP for Rate Contract for Establishment of District Emergency Operation Centre at 12 District of Rajasthan. (Jodhpur & Bikaner Zone)	Rs. 7.30/- Cr. Rs. 14.60 Lakh	25.06.2026 15.07.2026

Details can be seen on the websites **http://risl.rajasthan.gov.in, http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in, http://doitc.rajasthan.gov.in.** Bids are to be submitted through **http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in**

Raj.Samwad/C/26/5688 EE (Civil), DoIT&C

Rajasthan Medical Services Corporation Ltd.
D-Block, Swasthya Bhawan, C-Scheme, Jaipur – 302005
Ph. No. 0141-2223887, Fax No. 0141-2228065, E-Mail – edepmrmsc-rj@nic.in

Ref. No. :- F.8( )/RMSCL/EPM/NIB-947/2026/437 Dated :- 22/06/2026

Corrigendum / Addendum

Corrigendum / Addendum Bid No. (NIB-947) for Item Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) for revised conditions has been issued. Other particulars of the Corrigendum / Addendum may be visited on Procurement portal website **https://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in** or www.dipronline.org or **https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in** or website **http://rmsc.health.rajasthan.gov.in.**

UBN : MSC2627GLOB00016 Director (P)

Raj.Samwad/C/26/5710 Rajasthan Medical Services Corporation

OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL S. M.S.MEDICAL COLLEGE & CONTROLLER OF THE ATTACHED HOSPITALS, JAIPUR
No-F/MC/Store/2026-27/2267-73 Dated:- 16/06/2026

Notice Inviting Bid

Bid for procurement of below mentioned items at SMS Medical College, Jaipur, are invited from interested bidders **as per schedule in NIT Notice.** Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the Procurement portal (http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in https://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in) of the state; and SMS Medical College, Jaipur department website.

UBN: SMS2627GLOB00122 To SMS2627GLRC00134

DIPR/C/11196/2026 PRINCIPAL & CONTROLLER

कार्यालय अतिरिक्त मुख्य अभियन्ता, सार्वजनिक निर्माण विभाग, संभाग, अजमेर

क्रमांक:-अमुअ / अज. / तक. / एफ-2(3ए) निविदा / डी-850 दिनांक:- 18.06.2026

निविदा सूचना संख्या 10 वर्ष 2026-2027

राजस्थान के राज्यपाल महोदय की ओर से पोस्ट क्वालीफिकेशन पद्धति के अनुसार अजमेर, डीडवाना एवं नागौर जिले में सड़क कार्यों के लिए उपयुक्त श्रेणी में सार्वजनिक निर्माण विभाग, राजस्थान में पंजीकृत अथवा राज्य सरकार के अन्य विभागों / केन्द्र सरकार के अधीकृत संगठनों / केन्द्रीय लोक निर्माण विभाग / डाक एवम् दूर संचार विभाग / रेल्वे इत्यादि में पंजीकृत एए श्रेणी के संवेदकों से निर्धारित प्रपत्र में ई-प्रोक्यूरमेंट प्रक्रिया के माध्यम से ऑन लाईन निविदा प्राप्त की जावेगी। ई-निविदा से संबंधित विवरण वेबसाईट http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in एवं http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in देखा जा सकता है।

NIB No.:- PWD2627A1260.
UBN No.:-

PWD2627WLOB05345.	PWD2627WLOB05346.	PWD2627WLOB05347.	PWD2627WLOB05348.
PWD2627WLOB05349.	PWD2627WLOB05350.	PWD2627WLOB05351.	

अतिरिक्त मुख्य अभियन्ता,
DIPR/C/11117/2026 सा.नि.वि., संभाग, अजमेर।

PM MITRA PARK UTTAR PRADESH LIMITED
Niryat Bhawan, 8, Cantt Road, Qaiserbagh,
Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India
website: https://handloom.upsdc.gov.in

GLOBAL NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

Request For Proposal (RFP)

RFP No.- 01 **Date: - 26.06.2026**

Selection of Master Developer for Development, Operation and Maintenance of the PM MITRA Mega Textile and Apparel Park at Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh through Public Private Partnership (PPP) on Design, Build, Finance, Operate and Transfer (DBFOT) basis.

PM MITRA Park Uttar Pradesh Limited invites bid for Development, Operation and Maintenance of 1000 acre greenfield Mega Textile and Apparel Park at Lucknow. Interested parties are invited to submit their Proposal in accordance with the guidelines outlined in the RFP document.

Bid commencement date	**26.06.2026**
Pre-bid conference is scheduled on	**08.07.2026 (11:30 hours IST)**
Last date for bid submission	**24.07.2026 (17:00 hours IST)**

All other details including any date extensions, clarifications, amendments, corrigendum, etc., will be uploaded on the website **https://etender.up.nic.in** and will not be published in newspaper. Bidders shall regularly visit the website to keep themselves updated.

Email ID for queries: - pmmitraparklucknow@gmail.com

Chief Executive Officer,
PM MITRA Park Uttar Pradesh Limited, Lucknow

32001/459/2627

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
Office of the Additional Chief Engineer
Drainage Circle, Balasore
Email id: sedcbls@yahoo.com
"e" PROCUREMENT NOTICE NO.- ACEDCBLS-03/2026-27

1.	Name of work: -	Drainage works (Under D.I.P. Scheme)
2	Total No. of Project: -	04 Nos. of Individual work.
3	Estimated cost of individual works: -	Varies from Rs. 3,80,19,399/- to 6,87,17,900/- (Excluding G.S.T.)
4	Period of completion: -	11 (Eleven) Calendar Months
5	Bid Identification Number: -	ACEDCBLS/DDBLS-01-03/2026-27 ACEDCBLS/DDBLS-02-03/2026-27 ACEDCBLS/DDBLS-03-03/2026-27 ACEDCBLS/DDBLS-04-03/2026-27
6	Date & Time of availability of Bid document in the Portal: -	From Dt. 25.06.2026 at 10.00 hours to Dt. 09.07.2026 at 17.00 hours
7	Date & Time for receipt of Bid document in the Portal: -	From Dt. 25.06.2026 at 10.00 hours to Dt. 09.07.2026 at 17.00 hours
8	Date of Opening of Technical Bid: -	Dt. 10.07.2026 at 11.30 hours in the Office of the Additional Chief Engineer, Drainage Circle, Balasore.
9	Date of Opening of Financial Bid: -	To be uploaded in portal.
10	Cost of Tender Paper:-	Rs.10,000.00
11	Procurement Officer/ Name & address of the officer inviting Bids: -	Additional Chief Engineer, Drainage Circle, Balasore

Further details can be seen from the Govt. Website **www.tendersorissa.gov.in**

Sd/- **Additional Chief Engineer**
Drainage Circle, Balasore
OIPR-32001/32128/1/26-27/0003

ग्रेटर नौएडा औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण
प्लाट सं. 01, नालेज पार्क-IV, ग्रेटर नौएडा, गौतमबुद्ध नगर, उत्तर प्रदेश-201308
वेबसाइट: www.greaternoidaauthority.in ई-मेल: authority@gnida.in

पत्रांक–प्रे०नो०/उद्योग/2026/259 दिनांक : 25.06.2026

शुद्धि पत्र-02

सर्वसाधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि प्राधिकरण द्वारा दिनांक 25.03.2026 को समाचार पत्रों के माध्यम से दिनांक 28.03.2026 से 27.06.2026 तक के लिए मल्टीमॉडल लॉजिस्टिक्स पार्क की योजना–ONLINE-AUC-MMLP-02-2026 में भूखण्ड संख्या–01, एरिया–174.12 एकड़ सेक्टर–कप्पा–02, ग्रेटर नौएडा को ई–ऑक्शन के माध्यम से आवंटन हेतु प्रकाशित की गई थी।

उक्त योजना को आवेदकों के अनुरोध के दृष्टिगत एवं जनहित में निम्नानुसार तिथियों तक विस्तारित किया जाता है :–

Sr. No.	Activity Name	Old Date & Time	Extended New Date & Time
1.	Registration End Date & Time	27.06.2026 05 PM	03.07.2026 05 PM
2.	Last Date of Registration EMD Processing Fee Deposit	30.06.2026 05 PM	07.07.2026 05 PM
3.	Last Date of Final Submission of Documents	04.07.2026 05 PM	10.07.2026 05 PM
4.	E-Auction Date & Time	To be notified separately	To be notified separately

योजना ONLINE-AUC-MMLP-02-2026 के ब्रोशर की अन्य नियम व शर्तें यथावत रहेंगी।

प्रबन्धक (उद्योग)

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25001/526/2627

e-mail:- serw_ctc@yahoo.com

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, CUTTACK

No. Tender Online RWC-09/26 Letter No.- Date:-

e-Procurement NOTICE

1. **Name of the work** : Construction of **Road & Bridge** works.
2. **Class of contractor**
   c) Estimated cost more than Rs.6.00 Crore & upto Rs.50.00 Crore : Special Class (of Odisha PWD) & relevant class of other licensing authorities.
   d) Estimated cost more than Rs.1.00 Crore & upto Rs.20.00 Crore : A Class (of Odisha PWD) & relevant class of other licensing authorities.
   c) Estimated cost more than Rs. 20.00 Lakh & upto Rs.3.00 Crore : B Class (of Odisha PWD) & relevant class of other licensing authorities.
3. **Time for Completion** : As specified in the **Column-7 of the Annexure.**
4. **Detail Projects** : **As per Annexure attached**
5. **Other Details** :

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender On-line for bidding From	To	Last Date & Time of seeking tender clarification	Date & Time of opening of tender Technical Bid	Financial Bid
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Cuttack	Tender Online RWC-09/26	30.06.2026 at 11.30 A.M.	20.07.2026 up to 05.00 P.M.	20.07.2026 up to 02.00 P.M.	21.07.2026 at 11.30 A.M.	Will be intimated later

Further details can be seen from the website **www.tendersodisha.gov.in**

Sd/-
Chief Construction Engineer
Rural Works Circle, Cuttack
OIPR-25001/25097/1/26-27/0007

34001/391/2627

E-mail ID:cebuildings_orissa@yahoo.co.in
cebuildings@rediffmail.com
Tel. - (0674)-2391523

OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF (CIVIL), ODISHA
NIRMAN SOUDHA, UNIT-V, BHUBANESWAR
INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)

File No-B-I-Sports-08/2026 **Lr. No. 21904** **Bhubaneswar, the 20th June, 2026**

Invitation for Bids

Bid Identification No. CE-Bldg-II-16/2026-27

1. The Chief Engineer, Buildings-II (I/c), Odisha, Bhubaneswar, on behalf of Governor of Odisha, invites percentage rate bids in double cover system in ONLINE MODE only, for the works, **(1) "Construction of Block Level Stadium (With Indoor Hall) in Dunguripalli Block under Subarnapur District" & (2) "Construction of Block Level Stadium (With Indoor Hall) in Ullunda Block under Subarnapur District"** as detailed below.

2.	**Nature of work**	:	**Building Works**
3.	**No. of work**	:	**02 Nos.**
4.	**Bid Cost**	:	**Rs. 10,000/-**
5.	**Class of Contractor**	:	**'A' / Special**
6.	**Availability of Bid Documents in the website**	:	**From dt.30.06.2026 to 17.00 Hours of dt.15.07.2026.**
7.	**Date of Opening of Bid**	:	**Dt.17.07.2026 at 11:30 AM.**
8.	**The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website: https://tendersodisha.gov.in. Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website only.**		

Sd/-
Chief Engineer,
Buildings-II (I/c), Odisha
OIPR-34001/34117/1/26-27/0033

ASANAS & ALGORITHMS:

Yoga gets an AI twist

'Personalised routines and instant feedback are a win for beginners'

AI-powered yoga & wellness apps

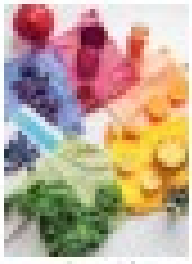
Smart mats and tech for yoga

'Yoga is more than workouts': Experts

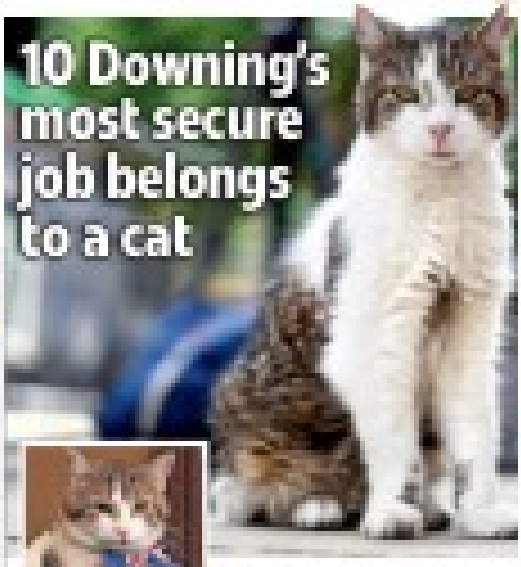
This costume gives kids four legs and zero dignity

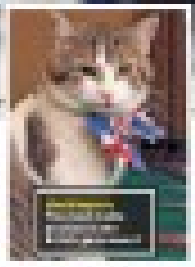
Paws, pull and public embarrassment

How to: Turn your garden staples into vibrant botanical ink

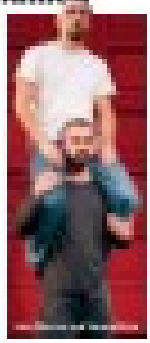


10 Downing's most secure job belongs to a cat





Moschino's stylish shift: New creative directors named



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Pai INTERNATIONAL

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- 0* Down Payment (Rest in EMIs) (On Select Models)
- 3 YEAR* WARRANTY (On Select LG TVs)
- Up to 30%* OFF on LG Soundbar (With Select 4K TVs)
- LG BEST Care Ask for AMC Up to 20% Discount*

Avail Exciting Offers on Your Favorite LG Products Only

OLEDG6 | 245cm (97) / 210cm (83) / 195cm (77) / 164cm (65) / 139cm (55)

FIXED EMI Starting from ₹2999* | Up to 26%* CASHBACK Max ₹26000*

QNED85 | 217cm (86) / 189cm (75) / 164cm (65) / 139cm (55)

FIXED EMI Starting from ₹1999* | Up to 7.5%* CASHBACK Max ₹9000*

NU88 | 215cm (85) / 189cm (75) / 164cm (65) / 139cm (55) / 126cm (50) / 109cm (43)

FIXED EMI Starting from ₹1999* | Up to 7.5%* CASHBACK Max ₹9000*

OLEDC6 | 210cm (83) / 195cm (77) / 164cm (65) / 139cm (55) / 121cm (48) / 106cm (42)

FIXED EMI Starting from ₹2999* | Up to 26%* CASHBACK Max ₹26000*

SIDE-BY-SIDE REFRIGERATOR / FRENCH DOOR REFRIGERATOR

UP TO 20%* CASHBACK Max. up to ₹20000
FIXED EMI STARTING FROM ₹ 2999*

TOP FREEZER REFRIGERATOR / BOTTOM FREEZER REFRIGERATOR

UP TO 12.5 %* CASHBACK Max. up to ₹5000
FIXED EMI STARTING FROM ₹ 1499*

SINGLE DOOR REFRIGERATOR

UP TO 10%* CASHBACK Max. up to ₹1000
FIXED EMI STARTING FROM ₹ 999*

FRONT LOAD WASHING MACHINE

UP TO 20%* CASHBACK Max. up to ₹9000
FIXED EMI STARTING FROM ₹ 1999*

TOP LOAD WASHING MACHINE

AI DD
TurboWash™
FIXED EMI STARTING FROM ₹ 1499*

LG TRUE DISHWASHER

FIXED EMI STARTING FROM ₹ 2999*

AIR CONDITIONERS

UP TO 5%* CASHBACK Max. up to ₹2000
FIXED EMI STARTING FROM ₹ 1999*

LG CONVERTIBLE OVEN MICROWAVE BHI. AIR FRY BHI.

60* Air Fry Menu
Charcoal Lighting Heater™

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TIMES NATION

* THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | SATURDAY, JUNE 27, 2026

TAMIL NADU CHIEF MINISTER VIJAY URGES PM MODI TO HALT NEYVELI LIGNITE CORPORATION DISINVESTMENT

SANJAY RAUT SAYS SHIV SENA (UBT) STRONG DESPITE SPLIT, AADITYA THACKERAY HAS CAPABILITY TO LEAD PARTY

IMD latest forecast says monsoon may revive after July 1

Neha.Madaan@timesofindia.com

Pune: India Meteorological Department (IMD)'s latest extended range forecast indicates a revival in rainfall after July 1, with the southwest monsoon likely to overcome the sluggish phase of the last few days and regain strength from early next month.

The forecast says rainfall is likely to remain below normal over most parts of the country during the first week (June 25-July 1), except parts of south peninsular and northeast India — where it is expected to be normal to above normal.

Rainfall is likely to be normal to above normal across the country during the second week of the forecast (July 2-8), the forecast said.

The forecast comes at a time when the country continues to face a rainfall deficit. India received 47% below-normal rainfall during the week ending June 24, while cumulative monsoon rainfall since June 1 remained 42% below normal. Central India recorded the sharpest seasonal deficit at 59%.

Sushma Nair, IMD scientist, explained the expected turnaround saying that monsoon flow is likely to remain weak for the next few days before strengthening. "The monsoonal flow is weak between June 26 and June 28-29, and there is nothing particularly favourable to push the monsoon pulse. Thereafter, the flow is expected to pick up strength and we expect rainfall activity to increase, accordingly," she said.

Nair said the revival is likely to begin along Maharashtra's coast before extending inland if conditions remain favourable. IMD also said that conditions are favourable for advance of southwest monsoon into some more parts of north Arabian Sea, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, remaining parts of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Bihar, some parts of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand over the next three to four days.

Nihangs breach security barricade, enter Doon

Demand Release Of 4 Arrested Members, Retreat After Talks

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Dehradun: A tense standoff between Nihang Sikhs and Uttarakhand's security agencies escalated in the intervening night of Thursday and Friday when a group of Nihangs allegedly breached police barricades at the Uttarakhand-Himachal Pradesh border and entered Dehradun brandishing swords and kirpans, prompting a major security alert in the state capital.

The development followed the gathering of scores of Nihangs at Paonta Sahib in Himachal on Thursday, where they demanded the release of four members arrested in connection with a recent clash with locals in Chamoli district's Karnaprayag area. Police said the group was initially stopped near the Kulhal interstate border, where senior officials held discussions with Nihang leaders. However, around 15-20 Nihangs broke through security barriers and proceeded towards Dehradun via alternative routes before eventually assembling at a gurdwara in Race Course area of the city.

TOI

Armed Nihangs at the border of Himachal Pradesh & Uttarakhand

DM Ashish Chauhan, SSP Pramendra Dobhal and senior officials held multiple rounds of talks with Nihang representatives through the night. "We held continuous talks with the jathedars who had arrived from Paonta Sahib. While many agreed to our terms and returned, about 15 to 20 individuals broke through the security barriers and attempted to enter the district. However, they were later persuaded and sent back," Dobhal said. The standoff was only temporarily resolved as a large number of Nihangs remained camped at Paonta Sahib.

Op Tiger 3.0 on, 14 UBT MLAs will defect: Min

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Mumbai: Two days after an MVA meeting addressed by Sena UBT president saw only 37 of the 60 opposition legislators turn up, Shiv Sena minister Gulabrao Patil Friday said Operation Tiger 3.0 had begun and that 14 Sena UBT MLAs would soon join deputy CM Eknath Shinde's party. Patil was contradicted about the operation claim by another Sena minister, Uday Samant, who said that no such operation was under way, though he did say that several MLAs from MVA were of their own accord interested in joining Shiv Sena.

Thackeray, who saw six of his MPs cross over to Sena a few days ago, has begun a tour of the constituencies of the six LS members who rebelled. He flew to Nagpur Friday — incidentally, on the same plane as CM Devendra Fadnavis — and, in a reassuring signal for him, all Vidarbha MLAs from Sena UBT confirmed they would be present at his rally Saturday in Yavatmal and Washim.

Sena UBT has 20 MLAs and the two-third mark to initiate a split is 14. Of the 20 MLAs, 10 are from the city, including Uddhav's son, Aaditya, and nephew, Varun Sardesai.

Shiv Sena netas dismissed Thackeray's tour as a belated outreach, accusing him of ignoring the constituencies during local body elections, when party workers were left to fend for themselves. "Wait for some time, more than 14 MLAs will come to him (Shinde). Eknath Shinde does not speak, he only moves his hands on his beard, this has been admitted by Uddhav Thackeray's son Aaditya Thackeray himself. When Eknath Shinde moves his hands on his beard, then Operation Tiger is a success," Patil said.

There was also speculation that Congress MLA Vijay Wadettiwar will join Sena, and Samant said it would be a "happy moment".

STATOISTICS A slice of life in numbers

Fewer underweight kids now in MP, Bihar; still twice Kerala's rate

Poor nutrition and illness are the main causes of underweight children in India. Since 2005-06, MP and Bihar have cut the rates sharply, from around six to about four in 10 children

% of underweight children under 5

CHANGE		2023-24	2005-06
MOST IMPROVED			
-20.3	Madhya Pradesh	40	60
-20.2	Bihar	36	56
-18.4	Uttarakhand	20	38
LEAST IMPROVED			
-1.2	Punjab	24	25
-5.1	Kerala	18	23
-5.6	Maharashtra	18	37

Kerala saw a smaller fall as its level was already low

Negative values indicate a decline from 2005-06 levels

Source: NFHS; SBI Research

IIT-B set to launch 1st int'l sub-campus in NY

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@timesofindia.com

Mumbai: IIT-Bombay is set to establish its first international sub-campus in the US, marking a significant milestone in the institute's global ambitions and bringing one of India's premier engineering institutions into the American higher education landscape.

The new campus will come up at State University of New York (SUNY) at Old Westbury on Long Island, New York, through a partnership that aims to jointly develop engineering education, research and innovation programmes. While the collaboration was formalised during a meeting between officials of the two institutions on Friday, several operational details are still being worked out.

The first academic offerings are expected by 2027, when certificate programmes in AI, sustainability and clean technology will be introduced. Degree programmes are expected to follow. As SUNY Old Westbury does not currently offer engineering courses, IIT-Bombay will help bridge that gap by bringing its academic expertise to the campus. Faculty members from the Powai institute will travel to New York to teach and help develop the curriculum.

"IIT-Bombay is recognised as a world-class institution," said SUNY Old Westbury president Timothy Sams. "We are excited to establish a direct partnership that advances teaching, innovation and excellence."

The collaboration was facilitated by India's Consul General in New York, Binaya Pradhan, who initiated discussions with SUNY Old Westbury on introducing engineering education.

Prehistoric site found near Chennai with rock art, tools

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Chennai: A student from the University of Madras has found a new prehistoric site with rock shelter, rock art, stone tools and pottery fragments at Ayilam village in Ranipet district, some 127 km from Chennai.

The rock shelter was situated on the elevated hillock within the isolated hill ranges of the Eastern Ghats where the student found a variety of stone tools including discoidal and multiplatform cores, scrapers, burins, notched tools and debitage primarily made from quartz.

Researchers said the rock shelter was a big one and an ideal habitation site for the Stone Age people. Scrapers were found in good numbers, indicating the site could belong to the Middle Palaeolithic period, they said. However, the site needs to be studied to assign the time period.

TOI

IN AWE: V Srimalini at the rock shelter at Ayilam village in Ranipet

"Pottery fragments such as red ware, red slipped ware, rusticated ware, red and black ware were found within the rock shelter, suggesting continued occupation of the site," said V Srimalini, a student from the department of ancient history and archaeology, University of Madras, who found the site.

In addition to these artefacts, four small megalithic burial structures were identified. "One of the most intriguing discoveries is the presence of rock art on the shelter's surface. An abstract motif created using white ochre was identified," said Jinu Koshy, excavation in charge.

2 teenage sisters drown in Ganga after saving brother

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Agra: Two teenage sisters lost their lives after diving into the Ganga river to save their 12-year-old brother from drowning in Uttar Pradesh's Kasganj district.

Around 7:30am Thursday, Saloni Kashyap (16) and her sister Komal (14) went to the riverbank with their younger brother, Shivnesh. Sunnagarhi SHO Pawan Kumar said the boy drifted into deep water and began to drown. Without a thought for their own safety, both sisters plunged into the swift current. While they successfully managed to push Shivnesh to the shore, the powerful current swept them downstream before nearby bystanders could intervene.

Local divers launched a rescue operation immediately. Komal was pulled from the water within 20 minutes but was declared dead upon arrival at a health centre. Saloni's body was recovered three hours later, approximately one kilometre downstream.

RAIL COACH FACTORY, KAPURTHALA

On-line bids are invited by PCMM, RCF on behalf of President of India for following items:-

Sr. No.	Tender No. and Due Date	Description	Quantity (Nos./Sets/ Cum)	EMD (Rs.)
1.	05261392 20/07/2026	FRONT PART.	148 Sets	8,78,750/-
		FRONT PART (LUGGAGE END).	89 Nos.	
2.	12261105 23.07.2026	SET OF AIR DUCT (WITHOUT AIR FILTERS) FOR 3-PHASE	69 Sets 50 Sets	1,07,190/-
		MEMU & ARRANGEMENT OF AIR DUCT FOR MEMU		
3.	12261134 23.07.2026	SET OF ROOF PANELS FOR 3-PHASE MEMU/TC COACHES	309 Set	10,20,940/-
4.	12261122 23.07.2026	SET OF FRP SIDE WALL PANELS FOR MEMU COACHES (3 types)	186 Set 30 Set 154 Set	11,27,880/-
5.	05261413 20/07/2026	FRONT PART.	87 Nos.	5,98,180/-
		FRONT PART COMPLETE.	74 Nos.	
6.	12261137 20/07/2026	BODY SIDE WINDOW ARRANGMENT WITH FIXED LOUVRE SHUTTER, (PL NO-31980983)	6893 Nos.	17,48,490/-
7.	05261435 20/07/2026	SET OF FINAL ROOF ELEMENT FOR AC 3 TIER AMRIT BHARAT 3.0 WITH FLAT ROOF COACHES (PL NO-33541759)	146 Set	4,68,260/-
8.	05261432 20/07/2026	END WALL COMPLETE NPP END FOR POWER CAR AMRIT BHARAT 3.0 COACHES.	19 Nos.	5,74,650/-
		END WALL COMPLET FOR AC 3 TIER AMRIT BHARAT 3.0 WITH FLAT ROOF COACHES.	290 Nos.	
9.	12261090 20/07/2026	WINDOWS FOR LHB COACHES (06 TYPES)	2884 Nos, 222 Nos,	7,12,820/-
		232 Nos, 903 Nos, 611 Nos, 525 Nos		
10.	05261426 20/07/2026	2 TYPES OF SET OF SIDE WALL ASSLY AND ROOF COMPLETE FOR LHB COACH (1. PL NO-33551844, 2. PL NO-33551868)	1. 26 Set 2. 29 Set	12,82,720/-
11.	05261369 10/07/2026	SET OF CARLINE FOR LHB BANGLADESH NON AC CHAIR CAR COACHES (PL NO-33529231)	58 Set	1,42,980/-
12.	05261381 09/07/2026	SET OF SIDE WALL ASSLY AND ROOF COMPLETE FOR LHB AC 3 TIER COACH (PL NO-33691976)	10 Set	1,99,940/-
13.	12261115 17/07/2026	1. Emergency Wider Window For LHB SCN Coaches (Size 1460x700, with Sliding Shutters) to PL No-33560389	3490 Nos.	20,00,000/-
		2. Wider Window For LHB SCN Coaches (Size 1460x700, with Sliding Shutters) to PL No-33560390	6206 Nos.	
14.	05261373 10/07/2026	1. SET OF FRONT PART FOR NON AC CHAIR CAR FOR BANGLADESH COACHES.	30 Set	10,78,980/-
		2. SET FRONT PART COMPLETE FOR BANGLADESH AC CHAIR CAR COACHES.	39 Set	
		3. SET OF FRONT PART FOR BANGLADESH LHB FIRST AC COACHES.	19 Set	
		4. SET OF FRONT PART FOR LHB BANGLADESH POWER CAR COACHES.	19 Set	
15.	12261121 15/07/2026	SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF BIO- DIGESTER SYSTEM LH FOR FAC (WJC) BANGLADESH RAILWAYS	241 Set	4,81,920/-
		SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF BIO-DIGESTER SYSTEM RH FOR FAC (WJC) BANGLADESH RAILWAY	21 Set	
16.	05261318 16/07/2026	SCHAKU SEMI PERMANENT COUPLER (PL NO./Item Code-31217102)	630 Nos	10,27,100/-
17.	12261107 28/07/2026	SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF ONE COACH SET OF ENTRANCE HAND RAIL FOR TRAIN SET DTC COACHES.	20 Set	4,57,840/-
18.	02261233 13/07/2026	COMPLETE DESIGN, SUPPLY, INSTALLATION, COMMISSIONING, MAINTENANCE MANUALS, (OBCMS)	-	20,00,000/-
19.	05261450 24/07/2026	3 TYPES OF SET OF CARLINE FOR LHB AMRIT BHARAT COACH (1. PL NO-33552307, 2. PL NO-33552915, 3. PL NO-33552990)	1. 216 Set 2. 149 Set 3. 22 Set	7,52,320/-
20.	05261368 24/07/2026	INTEGRATED WTCC FOR LHB BANGLADESH NON AC CHAIR CAR COACHES (PL NO-33516753)	140 Set	1,93,510/-
21.	12261164 28/07/2026	Set of Honey Comb partition Frame for LHB SCN with Al Fr HPL sheet.	96 Set	4,98,320/-
22.	05261360 27/07/2026	END WALL COMPLETE FOR BANGLADESH LHB FIRST AC COACHES.	112 Nos	6,62,620/-
		END WALL COMPLETE FOR NON AC CHAIR CAR FOR BANGLADESH COACHES.	112 Nos	
		SET OF END WALL FOR LHB BANGLADESH POWER CAR COACHES.	21 Set	
23.	02261239 13/07/2026	SET OF CAGE CLAMP	302 set	1,25,800/-
24.	05261436 20/07/2026	Set of Partition Frames	145 Sets	9,36,360/-
25.	05261343 20/07/2026	Set of Partition Frames	94 Sets	1,81,020/-
26.	05261417 22/07/2026	Set of Partition Frames	38 Sets	93,120/-
27.	05261443 21/07/2026	Brake Disc For LHB coaches for Wheel Set.	15623 Nos.	20,00,000/-

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PCMM

CORRIGENDUM

1) Tender No.: 05261316, **Description:** FRONT PART., **Due Date:** 14/07/2026, EMD to be read as **"Rs. 20,00,000"** instead of **"NIL"**

PCMM

No. 33-S/2026-27 **Date: 26.06.2026**

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Corrigendum

Tender No.: 91260051, Dated: 22/06/2026. The following Corrigendum against **Tender No. 91260051** scheduled to be opened on **10.07.2026, at 11:00 Hrs.** is carried out as under:- **Sl. No.: [01]. Particulars:** Item Details Description. **As per Tender Document :** Existing. **To be Read As :**Set of Roller Bearing Each Set Consisting of 01 No. Roller Bearing NU2236 E/C4,01 No. Roller Bearing NJ320E/C4 & 01 No. Thrust Coller HJ320E, Specn. No. 4TMS.096.065, Rev-1, ALT-3 or latest and RDSO'S FRS No-RDSO/EL/FRS/BEARING/0012-2015 REV-0.

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F. No. R-21011/5/2025-EP-III — **Dated: 27th June, 2026**

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3. Detailed advertisement and the application format will be hosted on the Ministry of Ayush website at www.ayush.gov.in and may be downloaded.
4. A candidate applying for more than one position will have to fill separate Proforma for each position.
5. Duly filled application in the prescribed proforma along with attested/self-attested copies of all relevant certificates should be sent to the following address: Secretary, Ministry of Ayush, AYUSH BHAWAN, B-Block, GPO Complex, INA, New Delhi, 110023, super-scribing on the envelope "Application for the Post of ..... (respective post) in the National Commission for Homoeopathy".

CBC 17201/11/0004/2627

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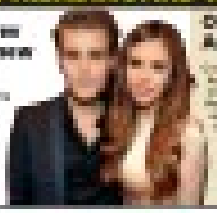
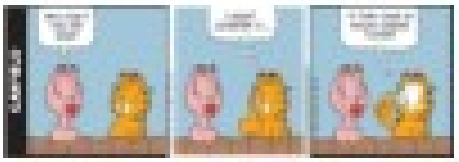
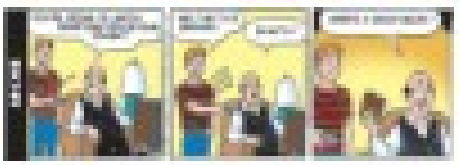


Oscar-nominated actor Ann Blyth dies at 96

Taylor-Kelce wedding buzz grows amid street closure permits, request for tents in NY





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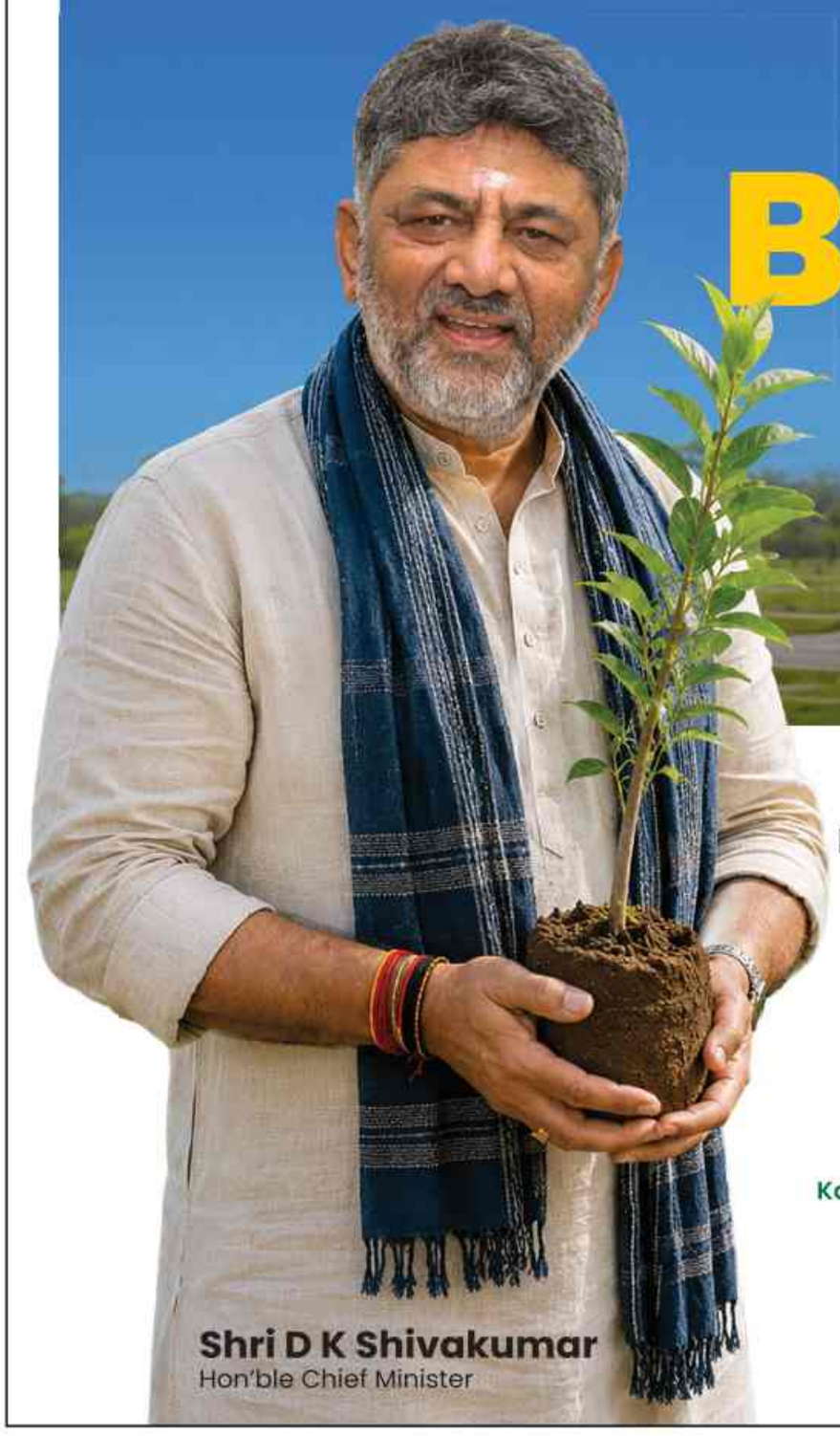

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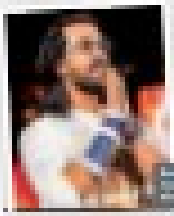

MUKH MANTRI SEHAT YOJANA

PUNJAB STRENGTHENS HEALTHCARE ACCESS WITH RS 10 LAKH COVER TO 65 LAKH FAMILIES

For years, a serious illness in a Punjabi household often meant two battles at once. One was against disease. The other was against mounting hospital bills. The Mukh Mantri Sehat Yojana (MMSY), launched by the Bhagwant Singh Mann-led Punjab Government, is seeking to change that reality by extending cashless health coverage to every resident of Punjab, irrespective of income, profession or social status. In what officials describe as the state's biggest healthcare safety net, the scheme promises treatment worth up to Rs 10 lakh per family every year, doubling the earlier ceiling of Rs 5 lakh and removing eligibility barriers that had excluded large sections of the population. More than three crore Punjabis, covering nearly 65 lakh families, now fall under its ambit. Unlike conventional welfare schemes targeted at select groups, the Sehat Yojana follows a universal approach. Government employees, pensioners, labourers, farmers and private sector workers are all entitled to the same financial protection. A network of 847 empanelled hospitals, including 223 government and 624 private institutions, forms the backbone of the initiative. The scheme covers more than 2,000 medical and surgical procedures under the latest Health Benefit Package 2.2, enabling patients to access specialised treatment without worrying about upfront payments. The benefits of this scheme have extended to patients requiring expensive long-term care. More than 5,000 cardiac procedures, including angioplasties performed during critical emergencies, have been carried out under the scheme. Nearly 4,600 knee replacement surgeries have been conducted in just three months, restoring mobility to elderly patients who had postponed treatment because of costs.

For thousands undergoing dialysis, cancer treatment and neonatal intensive care, the Sehat Card has increasingly become more than an entitlement. It has become a source of reassurance that medical decisions can be guided by urgency and need rather than a family's ability to pay.

"When my mother was diagnosed with cancer, I feared we would not be able to afford her treatment. The Mukh Mantri Sehat Yojana became our biggest support, covering most of the expenses. It not only eased our financial burden but also gave my family hope during our most difficult time."

— Gurpinder Jeet Singh, *beneficiary of MMSY*

UNIVERSAL HEALTHCARE FOR ALL

- **Till June 14, 2026, the government has generated 46.35 lakh health cards. These have facilitated 3.86 lakh cashless treatments across the state, translating into healthcare support worth Rs 637.63 crore**
- **847 empanelled hospitals, including 223 government and 624 private institutions**
- **Over 2,000 treatments and procedures are covered under Health Benefit Package 2.2**
- **More than 1 lakh dialysis procedures worth Rs 16.5 crore conducted under the scheme**

Punjab powers ahead as around 90% households receive zero electricity bills

Punjab's power sector has undergone a significant turnaround, emerging as a key pillar of the state's growth story with a focus on affordability and reliability. A large majority of households, around 90%, have been receiving zero electricity bills for the past four years with the provision of 300 units of free electricity every month to domestic consumers. In addition, eight hours of regular daytime power supply is being ensured for the agriculture sector. At the same time, electricity tariffs have been reduced by Rs 1.5 per unit for households, 79 paise for commercial users, and 74 paise for industries, making power more accessible across sectors. In a move that marked a departure from the trend of privatising public assets, Punjab acquired the 540 MW Goindwal Thermal Power Plant for Rs 1,080 crore in February 2024 and renamed it the Guru Amar Das Thermal Plant at Goindwal Sahib. Setting up a new plant of similar capacity would have cost around Rs 4,320 crore, making the acquisition one of the most economical power sector deals undertaken by a state government. The plant's performance has improved considerably since its takeover.

REVAMPED POWER SECTOR

- **Coal supply from Pachwara Coal Mine resumed, with 70 lakh metric tonnes supplied in 2024-25, resulting in savings of Rs 1,462 crore since October 2022**
- **Transmission capacity increased from 7,400/8,000 MW to 10,400/10,900 MW, enabling higher power import from the national grid**
- **Twenty-six new 66 KV substations were set up, 194 transformers upgraded and 34 added, with 2,738 MVA capacity addition and 337 circuit km of new lines**
- **A pilot project to shift high-tension wires underground has begun in Satauj village, covering 413 tube wells and 1,100 poles spread across 2,000 acres**

"We are grateful to Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann for the free electricity scheme. Receiving zero power bills for the past four years has eased our financial burden and allowed us to spend more on our children's education and daily needs."

— Dinesh Sharma, *Dera Bassi*

Massive irrigation overhaul expands canal reach and eases groundwater stress

PUNJAB GOVERNMENT'S RENEWED EMPHASIS ON CANAL IRRIGATION MARKS A DECISIVE SHIFT TOWARDS A MORE SUSTAINABLE WATER FUTURE

In a state where declining groundwater levels have emerged as one of the biggest threats to agriculture, Punjab has embarked on its most ambitious irrigation overhaul in decades, reviving neglected canals, restoring abandoned watercourses and extending canal water to thousands of farmers who had long relied solely on tube wells. Over the past four years, the Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann-led Punjab Government has incurred nearly Rs 7,200 crore to modernise the state's irrigation infrastructure, focusing on rejuvenating ageing canal networks and ensuring that surface water reaches the last mile. The scale of the exercise is unprecedented. A total of 19,314 watercourses spanning more than 7,400 km have been restored, while another 9,200 km of new watercourses have been constructed at a cost of Rs 2,600 crore to improve distribution and bring tail-end farmers into the irrigation network.

In a major breakthrough, 102 abandoned and encroached canals covering 551 km have been revived, extending irrigation benefits to more than 2.5 lakh acres. As a result, canal water has reached 1,582 locations for the first time, which had not received water for 30 to 40 years. The state's largest canals have also undergone historic upgrades. The capacity of the Sirhind Canal, which caters to nearly 60 per cent of Punjab's irrigation, drinking and industrial water requirements, has been enhanced for the first time since the 1930s. The move has enabled Punjab to utilise an additional 1.5 million acre-feet of water that previously remained unutilised in the Bhakra reservoir. Among the most significant success stories is the revival of the Kandi Canal Project, which had remained underutilised despite decades of investment.

- **Rs 7,200 crore invested in canal modernisation and irrigation infrastructure since 2022**
- **490 groundwater recharge structures created, recharging 22.87 lakh cubic metres of water**
- **28 lift irrigation schemes undertaken for Kandi areas, with 20 already operational**
- **More than 7,200 temporary outlets approved in 2026-27, bringing 2.24 lakh acres under canal irrigation**
- **Punjab has been utilising, on an average, 6,000 cusecs more canal water during the paddy season compared with the pre-2022 period**

"The revival of canals has brought new hope to farmers like me. Water now reaches our fields regularly, helping us cultivate better crops. I am grateful to Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann for prioritising Punjab's farmers and irrigation infrastructure."

— Tejinder Singh, *farmer, Bathinda*

'Yudh Nashian Virudh' deals crushing blow to drug networks in Punjab

The Punjab Government has dealt a significant blow to narcotics networks through its 497-day "Yudh Nashian Virudh" campaign. Launched on March 1, 2025, the campaign combined aggressive policing with community outreach and de-addiction measures, resulting in 48,428 FIRs under the NDPS Act and the arrest of 63,626 accused until June 11, 2026. Of these, 3,646 were booked in cases involving commercial quantities of narcotics. Punjab Police has arrested 3,631 drug suppliers and distributors, 65,790 peddlers and 579 "big fish" linked to organised drug trafficking networks. The crackdown also led to substantial seizures, including 3,064 kg of heroin, 38 tonnes of poppy husk, 810 kg of opium, 968 kg of ganja, 90 kg of charas, 5 kg of cocaine, 59 kg of ICE and more than 55 lakh tablets and capsules. Authorities recovered 403 drones used in cross-border smuggling, with 527 kg of heroin seized through drone-related operations. Investigators also targeted the financial backbone of the drug trade. Drug money worth Rs 22 crore was recovered, while 96 major hawala operators were arrested. Illegal assets remained under scrutiny, with 352 properties linked to drug smugglers demolished and assets worth Rs 327 crore belonging to 822 accused frozen.

"As a mother, nothing matters more than the future of our children. I thank CM Bhagwant Singh Mann for taking tough action against drugs and saving countless young lives from the grip of addiction.

— Gurpreet Kaur, *homemaker, Ferozepur*

Govt jobs rise to 68,228: Punjab's big push for youth employment

The Bhagwant Singh Mann-led Punjab Government has provided 68,228 regular government jobs across departments since assuming office in March 2022, marking what it describes as a shift in Punjab's recruitment culture. According to Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann, the appointments reflect a transparent and merit-based selection process, free from political influence, recommendations and corruption. "The sole criterion for selection has been hard work, dedication and merit. Gone are the days when government jobs were distributed on the basis of bribery and political connections," says Chief Minister Mann. Notably, work on 25 new Industrial Training Institutes is underway, while 13 existing ITIs are being upgraded with improved infrastructure and modern facilities. The government has also invested Rs 20 crore in the modernisation of government polytechnic colleges.

Punjab Government has not only focused on creating jobs but also on expanding opportunities within the state to discourage migration

"The Punjab government's transparent recruitment policy has given hope to thousands of youngsters. I thank Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann for ensuring that talent and hard work are the only criteria for securing jobs in government departments."

— Harpreet Dhillon, *Abohar*

Punjab overtakes Kerala in school education, emerges as leader

Government schools in Punjab have scripted a remarkable turnaround, with the state emerging as India's top-performing region in several school education parameters and surpassing Kerala, long regarded as the country's education model. The NITI Aayog Education Quality Report 2026 has placed Punjab ahead of Kerala on key foundational learning indicators, marking a watershed moment for a state whose government schools once struggled with issues of infrastructure, learning gaps and high dropout rates. Punjab recorded 82 per cent proficiency in language and 78 per cent in mathematics among Class III students, significantly higher than Kerala's corresponding scores of 75 per cent and 70 per cent. In Class IX mathematics, Punjab scored 52 per cent against Kerala's 45 per cent. The report credits Punjab for narrowing the urban-rural divide and ensuring equitable access to quality education for village students and girls. It also highlights the state's emphasis on outcomes rather than inputs. Backed by the Punjab Sikhya Kranti initiative launched by the Bhagwant Singh Mann government, classrooms across Punjab have undergone sweeping changes over the past four years. Punjab's focus on teacher capacity building has also yielded dividends. Teachers have received specialised training programmes in Finland and Singapore, with global best practices finding their way into classrooms across the state. The government has recruited 13,000 teachers and staff, established 118 Schools of Eminence and rolled out the English Edge Programme benefiting nearly three lakh students. Perhaps the most striking indicator of change is the growing success of government school students in competitive examinations.

As many as 786 students from government schools have cleared JEE Main, while 1,284 have qualified for NEET. The figures suggest that Punjab's education reforms are no longer confined to infrastructure upgrades. They are translating into measurable academic outcomes and expanding opportunities for students who had long remained on the margins of the country's educational success story.

PICS: DIPR, PUNJAB

- **Today, 99.9 per cent of government schools have electricity, 99 per cent have functional computers, and more than 80 per cent are equipped with smart classrooms**
- **The student-teacher ratio has improved to an ideal 22:1, while over 90 per cent of Class X students now transition to Class XI, indicating a sharp reduction in dropout rates**

NITI AAYOG REPORT PLACES PUNJAB AHEAD OF KERALA ON KEY LEARNING INDICATORS

Punjab Tops National School Rankings, Secures Prachesta-1 Grade

Punjab has secured the top position among states and Union Territories in the Performance Grading Index (PGI) 2.0 for 2024-25, released by the Department of School Education and Literacy under the Union Ministry of Education. The state has attained the coveted Prachesta-1 grade, awarded to those scoring between 51 per cent and 60 per cent.

63 Government School Students Crack JEE Advanced as IIT Dream Goes Rural

Government schools in Punjab have registered a significant breakthrough in one of India's toughest entrance examinations, with 63 students qualifying JEE Advanced 2026. The figure marks a 43 per cent increase from the 44 government school students who cleared the examination in 2025. The achievement has been attributed to targeted interventions under Punjab Sikhya Kranti, including free advanced coaching, upgraded infrastructure and sustained mentoring for JEE and NEET aspirants studying in government institutions.

"I am deeply grateful to Punjab CM Bhagwant Singh Mann for creating opportunities for students like me through quality coaching and academic support. Coming from a modest background, I could never have imagined receiving such guidance. Clearing JEE Advanced is a dream come true, and I hope to honour my late father's dream of seeing me become an engineer."

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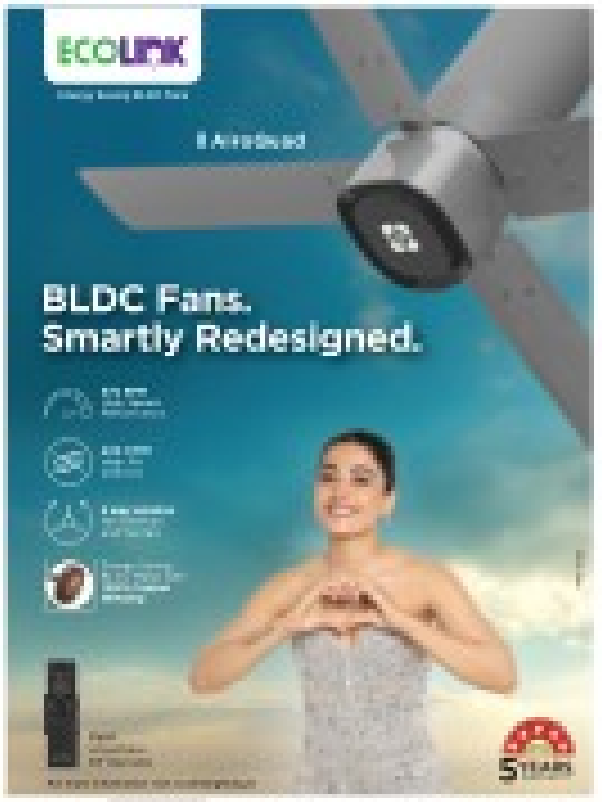

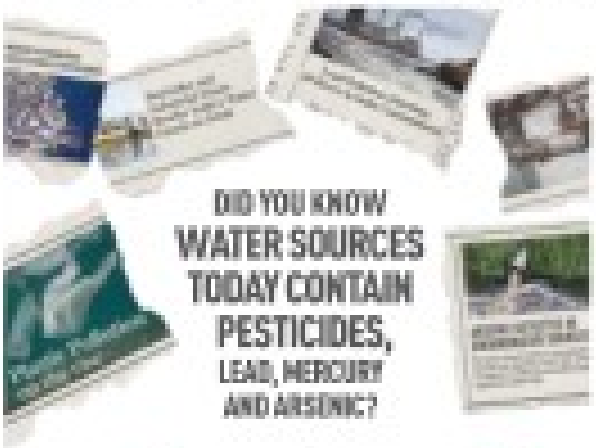

Other driver being drunk no excuse in road crash: Tribunal

Koushiki.Saha @timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Holding that mere consumption of alcohol by a road accident victim does not establish contributory negligence, a Delhi Motor Accident Claims Tribunal awarded Rs 30.8 lakh compensation to a man who suffered grievous injuries in a 2018 road accident.

Presiding official Shirish Aggarwal observed that although the petitioner's medico-legal report recorded smell of alcohol on his breath, "the quantity of alcohol consumed by the petitioner at the time of the accident is not on record and, therefore, it cannot be presumed that he was riding after consuming alcohol beyond the permissible limit."

The petitioner was travelling with a friend from Narainato Inderpuri on July 5, 2018, when a truck, allegedly being driven in a negligent manner, hit their motorcycle near the NDPL Pusa Gate traffic signal and dragged it for some distance, leaving both with serious injuries. During cross-examination, he admitted that both of them had consumed about half a can of beer before the accident.

The respondents sought to rely on petitioner's alcohol consumption as their defence. However, the tribunal noted there was "no evidence on record" to establish that he had been riding rashly or negligently under the influence of alcohol. It also drew an adverse inference against the truck driver for failing to step into the witness box, observing that he was the best witness to rebut the allegations.

The tribunal held, "Merely because someone has consumed alcohol within or beyond the permissible limit does not entitle anyone else to drive his vehicle rashly and hit such a person".

Delhi Police's 'Op Kavach' nets 255 drug traffickers

1,474 Teams Raided 4,035 Locations Over 48 Hrs

Times News Network

New Delhi: Delhi Police carried out the 14th edition of Operation Kavach during which 255 drug traffickers were arrested and 212 FIRs registered. The operation, monitored by police commissioner Satish Golchha, saw 1,474 police teams conduct raids at 4,035 locations across the city over a 48-hour period, between June 22 and 24.

During the raids, 329 people were also arrested in 315 cases under Arms Act. More than 900 teams from local police were part of the crackdown, operating under Special CPs Neeraj Thakur and Devesh Srivastva.

Police took 2,344 people into preventive custody as a precautionary measure to deter them from committing offences, while 60,806 people were detained under Delhi Police Act. They prosecuted 8,768 violators under Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act. The drive further resulted in the arrest of 55 auto-lifters and 49 proclaimed offenders. Police also filed cases for drinking in public places against 4,498 people while 4,708 vehicles were seized under Section 66 of Delhi Police Act.

Police seized a substantial quantity of narcotics, including 1kg of heroin, 237kg of ganja, 159 grams of cocaine, 101 grams of MDMA, 186 grams of methamphetamine, 2,640 buprenorphine tablets, and 287 pheniramine maleate injections, along with cash worth Rs 23 lakh. Six pistols, 90 countrymade firearms, 147 live cartridges and 242 knives were also seized.

"During the operation, 5,977 bad characters were verified, while 208 crime hotspots were specifically targeted. Police also checked 1,429 parks, public places and toilets as part of cordon-and-search operations, taking action against 397 narco-offenders. Further, 161 foreigners were verified and deportation proceedings were initiated against 21 of them," said special CP (crime) HGS Dhaliwal.

Op Kavach is a flagship operation of Delhi Police, conducted at frequent intervals. Data released by Delhi Police shows 1,418 narco-offenders across 1,812 cases were registered under NDPS Act between Jan and May this year.

₹57cr drugs destroyed in Navi Mumbai; police launch anti-narcotics helpline

Navi Mumbai: Police in Navi Mumbai on Friday destroyed a massive haul of seized illegal drugs valued at Rs 56.69 crore in the illicit market. The disposal took place on June 26 to coincide with the global observance of International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. Addressing the media, Navi Mumbai police commissioner Milind Bharambe emphasized the department's 'Nasha Mukt Navi Mumbai Abhiyan' (Drug-Free Navi Mumbai Campaign). To turn citizens into active partners in this fight, the Navi Mumbai Police launched a dedicated, round-the-clock anti-drug helpline: 8828-112-112. "Citizens can share information anonymously," Bharambe said. PTI

Chhattisgarh sets up panel led by ex-SC judge to draft UCC

Rashmi.Drolia@timesofindia.com

Raipur: Chhattisgarh govt has constituted a five-member high-level committee headed by former Supreme Court judge Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai to prepare a draft Uniform Civil Code (UCC) and recommend a roadmap for its implementation in the state.

Chief minister Vishnu Deo Sai's Office announced the decision on social media platform X. The CM's office said that the state govt had formed the panel to prepare the framework for the UCC and its implementation.

Constituted through a notification issued by the general administration department (GAD), the committee includes retired IAS officers Shatrughan Singh and MK Raut, senior advocate Mohan Pawar, and former principal Jyoti Rani Singh as members.

The panel has been tasked with reviewing the existing legal framework governing personal laws and examining issues related to marriage, divorce, maintenance, inheritance, adoption and other civil matters before preparing a draft UCC for Chhattisgarh.

It will also seek suggestions from citizens, social organisations, legal experts and other stakeholders, besides studying the legal frameworks adopted by states that have implemented or initiated steps towards a Uniform Civil Code. The committee will submit its draft along with legislative and administrative recommendations to the state govt, officials said.

The BJP govt had announced its decision to constitute the panel during a cabinet meeting on April 15, stating that the objective was to simplify civil laws, remove disparities arising from multiple personal laws, and promote gender and legal equality.

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I, Nataraj Ramalingam Adithya S/o Nataraj Ramalingam R/o H 103, Smondo 3 Neo Town, Electronic City Phase 1, Bengaluru - 560100, changed my name as Ramalingam Adithya

I, Vinod Shiva, residing at #320, 2nd Cross, Chamundi Nagar, RT Nagar Post, Bang-32, have changed my name to Vinod Shivu with effect from 26/6/2026. Hereafter, I shall be known as Vinod Shivu.

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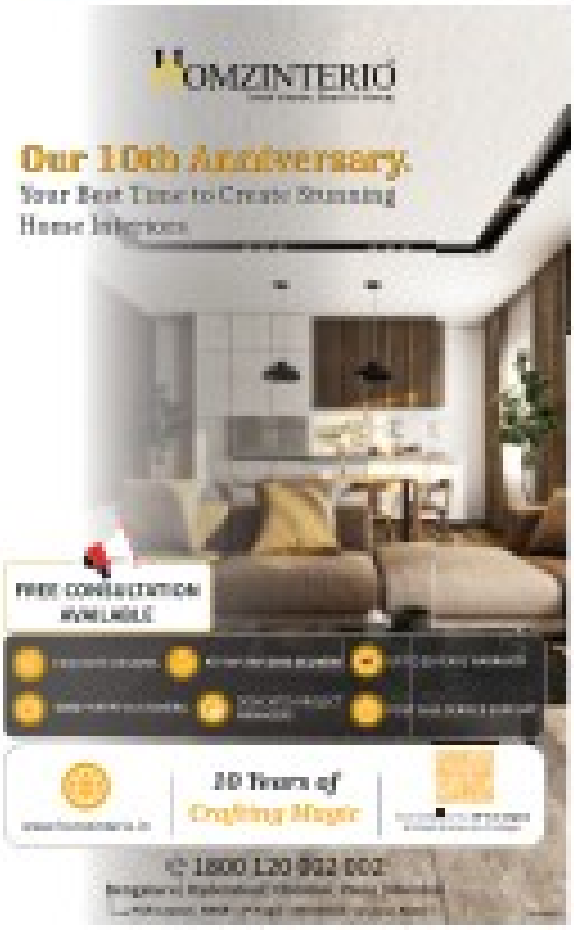
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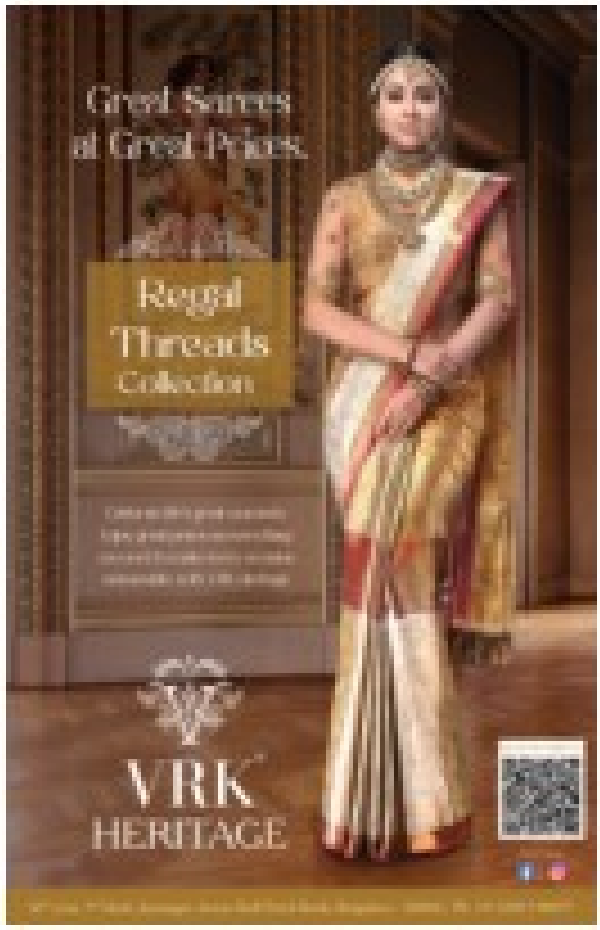
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No tenancy rights in service ties: Court

'Caretaker Or Help Not Family Member'; Asks Trespasser To Vacate Flat

Rebecca.Samervel
@timesofindia.com

Mumbai: Observing that a "service" relationship, such as that of a caretaker or domestic help, does not constitute a "family" relationship under the law, and that simply residing with a tenant for convenience does not grant the right to inherit tenancy, a civil court this week ordered the immediate eviction of a man who had been occupying a 500 sq ft flat in Dadar Hindu Colony for over a decade.

The court ruled that the defendant, Madhukar Kadam, was a trespasser rather than a legal heir. The court rejected Kadam's claim that he was a family member of the deceased original tenant, Meera Tendulkar, citing his inability to provide basic familial details and their differing castes. "I safely conclude that in the absence of any legal and lawful right, the status of the defendant and his family members...is nothing but that of a trespasser. After the death of Meera Tendulkar, they have no right to retain the property. They cannot inherit the rights of the original tenant merely by occupying it after her death," judge A H Baig said.

The court rejected Madhukar Kadam's claim of being a family member of the deceased tenant, Meera Tendulkar, citing his inability to provide basic familial details and their differing castes

Regarding the defendant's reliance on a ration card, the judge observed, "Mere entering the name in ration card will not make the defendant a relative of the deceased."

The suit was initiated in 2013 by Hemant and Vineet Sardar, the US-based owners of multiple buildings on Khareghat Road in Dadar Hindu Colony. The dispute centers on the contested occupancy of the ground-floor premises in Mangesh Mahalaxmi building, which was originally tenanted by Tendulkar. The petitioners, representing the building owners, submitted that following her death in Nov 2011, Kadam lacked any legal standing to remain in the property. They submitted that Kadam and his now-deceased father, who was employed as Tendulkar's domestic help, were never tenants or legal heirs.

However, Kadam claimed that his father was Tendulkar's cousin and that they had lived together as a family since 1965. He claimed that this relationship granted him the right to inherit the tenancy, a position he attempted to bolster by citing a declaration letter purportedly issued by Tendulkar in 2011.

The civil court, however, noted that the defendant and the deceased tenant belonged to different castes and different native regions, and Kadam was unable to provide basic details regarding Tendulkar's *gotra* or family.

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For those interested in Kriyayoga initiation, registration forms can be filled at the venue and the registration fee paid online. Attendees are requested to be at the venue by 5 pm. The talks will be followed by a Q&A Session.

Light refreshments will be served at the venue.

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Maintenance can't be denied if divorce is over harassment: HC

Vaibhav.Ganjapure
@timesofindia.com

Nagpur: Observing that a woman cannot be deprived of maintenance merely because she sought divorce after alleged harassment and assault, the Nagpur bench of the Bombay high court recently upheld a family court order directing a Madhya Pradesh-based man to provide monthly financial support to his estranged wife.

Justice Urmila Joshi-Phalke dismissed a criminal revision application filed by a man from Chhindwara, who challenged the maintenance awarded to his Nagpur-based wife under Section 125 of Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC).

The man argued that his wife voluntarily left the matrimonial home and later filed a divorce petition, which, according to him, showed that she was unwilling to cohabit and therefore not entitled to maintenance.

Rejecting the contention, the judge held that the circumstances clearly showed neglect and refusal on the husband's part. She noted that the wife alleged repeated harassment over dowry demands and physical assault after marriage.

The couple got married on April 16, 2012. The wife alleged that soon after marriage, she was subjected to mental and physical cruelty by the husband and his family members. She specifically referred to an incident on June 4, 2014, when she was allegedly assaulted with a waist belt by her husband, after which she approached the police and was referred to the Women Cell.

The court observed that during cross-examination, the husband failed to discredit the allegations of assault and harassment.

HC upholds ban on Instagram account

Vaibhav.Ganjapure
@timesofindia.com

Nagpur: Nagpur bench of Bombay High Court recently upheld Meta's decision to permanently suspend an Instagram account of a city-based influencer accused of sharing sexually explicit content with a minor, observing that online child sexual exploitation was emerging as "one of the most serious forms of cyber-enabled crime".

A division bench comprising Justices Anil Kilor and Raj Wakode dismissed the writ filed by the influencer, who failed to obtain relief from the Grievance Appellate Committee constituted under Information Technology Act rules.

In a strongly worded order, the court underscored the growing dangers posed by online child exploitation and endorsed Meta's strict enforcement policy against explicit content.

"Online child sexual exploitation has emerged as one of the most serious forms of cyber-enabled crime, causing irreversible physical, psychological and emotional harm to children," the bench observed. "Meta's zero-tolerance policy cannot be faulted as being arbitrary or disproportionate. Rather, it constitutes a necessary and proportionate response to one of the most heinous forms of online abuse," the court said.

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Foundry Nagar, Agra - 282006 (U.P.)
Extension Centre Ec Ettumanoor Organizes
PPDC
EV SCOOTER MASTER CLASS
Course Content: • EV Basics & Architecture • Battery Technology, BMS • Charging System • Motor & Controller • Wiring And Electrical • Electronic & Sensor Systems • Diagnostics & Troubleshooting • Calculations & Performance • Safety & Handling • Complete Assembly of E- Scooter.
Date/ दिनांक: 4th &5th July 2026. (offline Program) (sat & sun)
Time/ समय: 10.00am to 4.00pm
Fees/ शुल्क: Rs. 4000/-
Venue/ स्थान: Havana yuktha solutions, 302, 66th cross, 5th block Rajajinagar Bangalore -560010.
Bring one passport size photo,aadhar and qualification photocopy
Contact Number: 9626516812, 9750747571, 6363055419.
Certificate will be awarded.

टाटा मूलभूत अनुसंधान संस्थान
tifr TATA INSTITUTE OF FUNDAMENTAL RESEARCH
होमी भाभा रोड, कुलाबा, मुंबई-400005/Homi Bhabha Road, Colaba, Mumbai 400005
भारत सरकार के परमाणु ऊर्जा विभाग की स्वायत्त संस्था एवं समविश्वविद्यालय
An Autonomous Institute of the Department of Atomic Energy, Government of India, and a Deemed-to-be University
विज्ञापन सं. 2026/12/ Advertisement No. 2026/12
Invite applications for Project Junior Engineer (B) [Civil] posts tenable at TIFR Mumbai. For details, please visit the website http://www.tifr.res.in/positions.
कुलसचिव, टीआईएफआर / Registrar, TIFR

Office of Superintendent Engineer Cum Project Manager WCDC, Zila Parishad Churu

S.No. 406-12 | NOTICE INVITING BID E-NIT No 09/2026-27 | Date: 16.06.2026

Bids for Watershed development works Churu of estimated value **192.25 Lac (S.No.01), 195.25 Lac (S.No.02), 298.20 Lac (S.No.03), 276.02 Lac (S.No.04), 99.05 Lac (S.No.05), 294.63 Lac (S.No.06), 208.55 Lac (S.No.07),** are invited from interested bidders up to 19.06.2026, 10:00 AM to 09.07.2026, 17:00 PM. Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in Or **http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in)** of the state/ departmental website.
NIB Ref.No. **ENIT_09_2026_27_SE_CHURU**
NIB Code - **WSC2627A0462**
UBN - **WSC2627WSOB00737, WSC2627WSOB00738 WSC2627WSOB00739, WSC2627WSOB00740 WSC2627WSOB00741, WSC2627WSOB00742, WSC2627WSOB00743**

अधीक्षण अभियन्ता एवं परियोजना प्रबंधक
वाटरशेड मैल कम- डाटा सेन्टर जिला परिषद् चुरू

DIPR/C/11203/2026

PUBLIC NOTICE

The general public is hereby informed that our Client intends to acquire the property described in the **Schedule** below ("**Schedule Property**") owned by Sagar Steel Private Limited, having its registered office at - No.14, 9th Avenue, 3rd Floor, N. S. Iyengar Street, 3rd Cross, Seshadripuram, Bengaluru- 560 020 ("**Owner**"). The Owner has represented that it is the sole and absolute owner of the Schedule Property and has unrestricted rights of alienation over the same.

Any person(s) or entity claiming or having any claim(s), interest(s), right(s), title, demand(s), share(s) or estate interest in respect of the Schedule Property or any part thereof in any manner whatsoever, including but not limited to sale, exchange, mortgage (equitable or legal), let, lease, sub-lease, lien, charge, insolvency or bankruptcy proceedings, maintenance, license, gift, inheritance, share, possession (physical or constructive), easement, right of way, trusts, bequests, assignments, family settlements, partitions, court decrees, pending litigation, attachments (judicial or revenue), land acquisition proceedings, developmental rights, powers of attorney, options to purchase, any agreement or any other encumbrance of whatsoever nature, whether registered or unregistered are hereby required to intimate the undersigned in writing within **ten (10) days** from the date of publication of this Public Notice, together with copies of all relevant documents supporting such claim(s)/interest(s). If no such objection or claim is received, it will be conclusively construed that (i) no person, except the Owner, has any right, interest or claim in or in relation to the Schedule Property, (ii) claimants, if any, have relinquished/waived their claim(s)/ interest(s)/ right(s) in the Schedule Property, (iii) there exists no claim(s) or demand(s) against the Schedule Property or any part thereof and the Schedule Property is clear, marketable, and free from all encumbrances, and (iv) the Owner shall be free to deal with the Schedule Property in the manner the Owner deems fit without further notice and there is no objection to the proposed acquisition of the Schedule Property by our Client.

Schedule

The immovable property being Plot No. 20 bearing E-PID No. 4004528034 measuring about 4 Acres formed in portion of the land bearing Survey Nos. 19/1 & 19/2 situated at Doddanekundi II Phase Industrial Area, Hoodi Village, K. R. Puram Hobli, Bengaluru East Taluk, Bengaluru Urban District which is bounded on its:

East by : Private land;
West by : 80 feet wide PWD Road;
North by : Plot No. 21; and
South by : Plot No. 19.

Signed/-
R Vasudev / B S Raghavi
Magnah Law Partners
No. 1/24, Hanumanthappa Layout
Ulsoor Road, Bengaluru - 560 042
Phone No. 080-46462424
Email id: raghavi.bs@magnahlaw.com

Date: June 27, 2026

DIRECTORATE OF MINORITIES
Maulana Azad Bhawan, No.16 C, Millertank Bed Road, Vasantnagar, Bangalore - 52

No.: DOM/DEVP/MAMS/Nursery Kit/CR-40/2026-27 | Dated: 26.06.2026

ANNOUNCEMENT OF SHORT TERM TENDER

Short term Tender has been invited by the Directorate of Minority for Supplier to supply Nursery Kits to the students studying in LKG and UKG classes of Karnataka Maulana Azad Public Schools working under Minority Welfare Department in the academic year 2026-27. Details are given below. Interested bidders should apply through online mode under GeM Portal.

Sl. No.	No. of Details	Date/Time
1	Date of Tender Publication	Date:26.06.2026
2	Tender amount	412.50 lakhs
3	EMD amount	6,18,750/-Rs
4	Pre-bid meeting	Date:02.07.2026 11.00 am
5	Last date and time for submission of tender	Date:13.07.2026 By 5.30 pm
6	Date and time of technical bid opening	Date:15.07.2026 10.30 am
7	Date and time of financial bid opening	Date:18.07.2026 11.30 am
8	Place of tender opening and contact address	Maulana Azad Bhawan, No.16 C, Miller tank Bed Road, Vasantnagar, Bangalore-52.
9	Telephone number to be contact	080-22535902/901 080-22535919

Other details can be obtained from the website of the Directorate of Minorities https://dom.karnataka.gov.in and GeM Portal.

Sd/- Director, Directorate of Minorities, Bangalore

DIPR/CP/1369/AKAR/2026-27

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the public at large that our client ("**Client**") proposes to acquire securities in **M/s. TRIL Constructions Limited ("Company")** (CIN: U45201MH2007PLC 171985), a company incorporated under the Companies Act, 1956, having its registered office at Office no. 4/5, 1st Floor, Plot-11/13, Botawala Building, Horniman Circle, Fort, Mumbai-400001.

The said company is the owner, and in possession of land bearing **Municipal no. 2, MES Road, Jalahalli, Ward no. 1, HMT, (PID no. 1-56 -2) (earlier being Survey No. 11 measuring 12 Acres 39 Guntas / 5,65,191 Sq Ft with no Kharab, situated at Taneeranahalli Village, Yeshwanthapura Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, Bangalore Urban District** acquired under Sale Deed dated 11.07.2013 registered as document no. RJN-1-01969-2013-14 stored in CD no. RJND254 at the Office of Sub Registrar Rajajinagara. The company does not own any other immoveable property.

All persons having or claiming any right, title, interest, or claim whatsoever in respect of the said company, its business, its securities, management and operations, and/or the aforesaid immovable property, whether by way of subscription, sale or purchase, gift, inheritance, transmission, mortgage, charge, lien, trust, possession, easement, attachment, or otherwise, are hereby requested to make the same known in writing, together with all supporting documents, to the undersigned at the address given below within 10 (TEN) days from the date of publication of this notice.

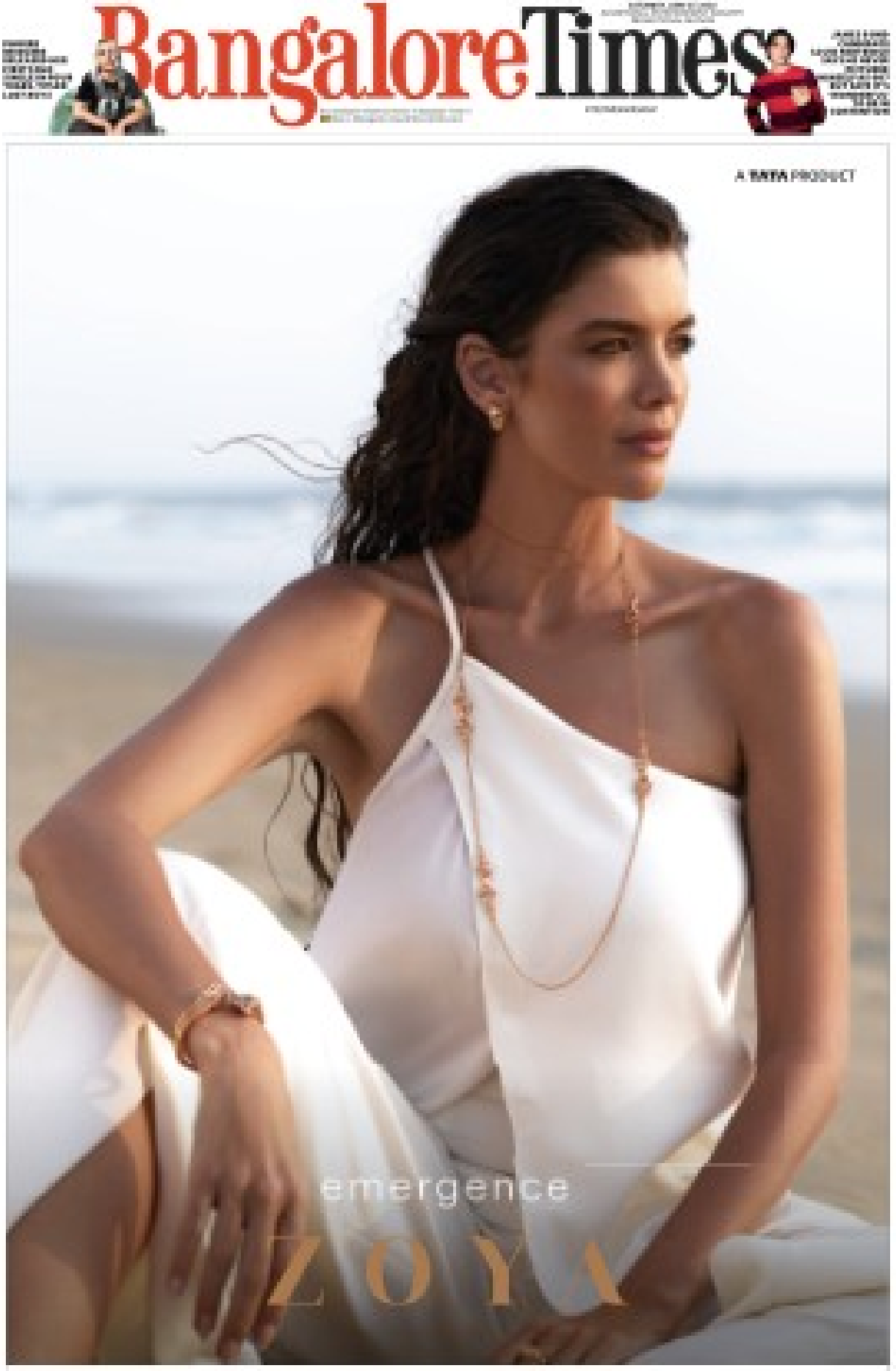
If no such claim is received within the stipulated time, the proposed transaction shall be completed without any reference to such claims, and any such claims, if any, shall be deemed to have been waived and shall not be entertained thereafter.

Place: Bangalore, Date: 27.06.2026

FoxMandal Solicitors & Advocates

Mr. S T Prashantha Kumar, Advocate & Senior Partner
Mr. Mali Pavan Gowda, Advocate & G-Head
Fox Mandal & Associates, Solicitors & Advocates,
FM House, 6/12, Primrose Road, Bangalore – 560025, Karnataka, India
Phone: +91 80 2559 5911. e-mail : prashantha.kumar@foxmandal.in

Bangalore Times



Paraplegic falls into open drain, dies

Krishna.Chaudhary @timesofindia.com

Bareilly: A 21-year-old differently abled man died after falling into an uncovered 6ft drain in Roshannagar locality of Barwar town in Lakhimpur Kheri district of UP, police said Friday. Sandeep Kumar was paraplegic and moved around by supporting himself with his hands.

Rajesh Kumar, a resident, said, "Sandeep stepped out in the evening and did not return home. As the night wore on, family members began searching for him and eventually found him lying in the open drain, a short distance from his house. He was pulled out but had already died."

Residents alleged that the uncovered drain had been brought to the notice of authorities several times. They blamed the nagar panchayat for negligence and claimed that a proposal to cover the drain with slabs was approved nearly a year ago, but was never implemented. They said the drain was constructed in 2012 and its cover was removed within six months for cleaning. Some of the slabs were later found damaged.

Siya disliked fiancé hair patch, looks: Cops

'She Claimed Eliminating Ketan Was Easier'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

IANS

Ketan's father met Maharashtra chief minister Devendra Fadnavis and demanded death penalty for the murderers

Pune: Siya Goyal has claimed she killed fiancé Ketan Agarwal because she disliked the fact that he wore a hair patch, police said on Friday based on the interrogation of the prime accused in Lonavala's Lohagad Fort murder case.

The 20-year-old reportedly reiterated her dislike for Ketan's appearance before investigators. Asked why she didn't simply refuse marriage, she offered a chilling rationale: she did not want to hurt her family's sentiments. "She claimed hatching a plot to eliminate Ketan by pushing him off the fort was 'easier' than hurting her family members by calling off the wedding," an officer said.

Ketan's father Vishal Agarwal dismissed the claim as an absurd justification for a heinous crime and met Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis. The CM described the 26-year-old realtor's murder as "extremely shocking and unimaginable" while announcing eminent lawyer and 26/11 attacks case lynchpin Ujjwal Nikam as special public prosecutor for this case.

Vishal clarified that his son wore a small hair patch due to a medical condition and that the Goyal family had been informed of this before engagement. "Wearing a hair patch cannot be a reason to kill my son. If she disliked it, she should have refused the marriage. This is no excuse for murder," Agarwal said.

Pune police Friday recorded the statement of Siya's brother Sahil. Investigators believe the motive for the crime is rooted in plans for a forced marriage and a secret relationship. "Preliminary probe suggests Sahil was aware of his sister's relationship with Chetan Chaudhary (co-accused). We are verifying if he (Sahil) had shared this information with other family members," an officer said.

According to the police, the Goyals became aware of Siya's closeness to Chetan at a community cricket match this Jan. However, due to a significant disparity in financial status between the two families, the Goyals allegedly disregarded Siya's feelings and fixed her marriage with the wealthier Agarwal family instead.

Ram Mandir theft case to see wider probe

▸ Continued from page 1

The accused were detained after an FIR was filed by temple trust member Krishna Mohan Thursday, based on the SIT report.

Apart from the eight arrested, who have been booked under relevant sections of BNS for criminal conspiracy, criminal breach of trust and dishonestly receiving stolen property, the FIR also mentions "others" on the list of accused, indicating that more names might be added during the investigation.

Although none of the accused so far are govt employees, the invocation of sections 13 (1) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, which deals with criminal misconduct by a public servant, indicates the scope of the investigation would be expanded further.

"The funds (donations) were misappropriated, stolen and embezzled by employees of the trust," said Ayodhya prosecution officer KC Verma.

3 workers die from toxic fumes in Delhi septic tank

New Delhi: Three men died after inhaling toxic fumes inside a septic tank at a factory in west Delhi's Mundka Industrial Area Friday, **reports Devanshi Mehta.**

Police said the workers entered the tank one after another in a desperate bid to save each other.

The victims, Chand (42), Arun (38) and Sandeep (32), were residents of Indra Jheel in Sultanpuri. Their families alleged they were sent inside without any safety gear.

Police arrested Suraj Marwah (50), the factory owner; Jayant (61), who worked at the factory; and Neeraj (25), the contractor and owner of the pumping vehicle. All three have been booked under sections 106 (death due to negligence) and 3(5) (common intention) of BNS, Section 9 of Prohibition of Manual Scavenging Act and relevant sections of SC/ST Act.

Police said a PCR call was received at Mundka police station around 12.09pm stating that "three men who had entered the tank to clean it have fallen inside".

Rajesh Mehta

Arun's brother at Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Hospital mortuary as he awaited the body on Friday

A senior police officer said on reaching the spot, cops learnt that Marwah Printers had hired Neeraj, a resident of Nangloi, for the cleaning of a septic tank inside the factory premises in street no. 1, Mundka Industrial Area. At the time of the incident, Neeraj was also engaged in the cleaning work along with the other three.

According to the victims' families, Chand was the first to be sent inside the septic tank after the pumps failed to take out the remaining gunk stuck at the bottom. When he stopped responding, Arun climbed in to check on him and bring him out. Moments later, Arun also became unresponsive. Sandeep then entered the tank to rescue both men, but he too collapsed after inhaling the poisonous gas. Neeraj, who had remained outside, immediately alerted the factory management and raised the alarm.

Delhi Fire Service said firefighters rushed to the factory after receiving information and pulled the workers out of the tank. However, all three men had died. Their bodies were shifted to Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Hospital in Mangolpuri for postmortem to ascertain the exact cause of death.

The families claimed the three men entered the tank bare-bodied and were not provided any protective gear.

Who's keeping CJP protest running? An electrician, a doctor and many others

Sugandha.Jha1@timesofindia.com

TOI

Among those helping are langar groups that routinely serve food outside Delhi's hospitals

New Delhi: An electrician from Lucknow, a thelawala from Delhi, a doctor from Mumbai, nursing professionals, UPSC aspirants and PhD scholars are among the many volunteers working behind the scenes to keep the Cockroach Janata Party protest going at Jantar Mantar.

While the protesters occupy the spotlight, these volunteers have been managing food and water donations from the public — supplies that recently came under scrutiny after police allegedly began restricting their entry and verifying the identities of those bringing them.

At the protest site on Friday, queues formed for plates of rajma-chawal while stacks of water bottles, tiffins and large vessels of food lined one side of the makeshift camp. A few metres away, a small table became a dispensary with medicines for headaches, fever and stomach ailments. The arrangements are managed not by any organisation but by an informal network of around 15-20 volunteers who met only after the protest began on June 20.

Volunteers wearing white T-shirts, with "Marshall Volunteer" written on them, have been helping distribute food and water, often seeking help from the protesters.

"There is no organisation as such. Whoever wants to help comes forward," said Md Junaid, an advocate from Ghazipur who coordinates the volunteers. "People from different professions and backgrounds have formed a camaraderie. We work in shifts so that someone is always available to manage the food, water and other essentials."

Among them is Surya Pratap Singh, a farmer from Madhya Pradesh who now lives in Noida. "I've been here since morning. By afternoon I'll go home, and someone else will take over. Tomorrow I'll return," he said. Singh said he was moved by his own experience with recruitment exams. "I appeared for the MP Police recruitment exam in 2009 and the paper was cancelled. Two of my cousins qualified NEET but couldn't secure admission to a govt medical college and the matter is still in court. I now farm on my family's land and support two school-going children. I know what these families go through."

The volunteers say much of the food comes from ordinary people. Some arrive as home-cooked meals, while others send in orders for water, biscuits or juice through delivery apps. At one point during **TOI**'s visit, a man quietly dropped off nearly 50 kg of vegetable pulao. Volunteers said people often offer cash donations, which they usually decline, instead requesting them to directly send supplies.

"If we urgently need to buy something, we pool in, paying Rs 200-300 each. That's all. There is no outside funding," one volunteer said.

AN ADVOCATE SAYS

There is no organisation as such. Whoever wants to help comes forward

Among those helping are langar groups that routinely serve food outside Delhi's hospitals.

Others have put their livelihoods on hold. Brajesh Pandey, who runs a small thela in Noida and describes himself as a gau rakshak, said he has shut his business to stay at the protest site. "I lose nearly Rs 3,000 every day, but I want to support people fighting the system. I sleep here and spend the entire day here," he said.

An electrician from Lucknow, whose wife and one-and-a-half-year-old daughter are in his hometown, said his family does not even know he has been at the protest site since June 19. "It would only worry them," he said.

A DU PhD scholar from Uttar Pradesh, who requested anonymity, said she studies for three hours every morning before taking a Rapido ride from Wazirabad to Jantar Mantar to distribute water. "My parents tell me not to come because they worry about my safety. But students are dying by suicide. Someone has to raise questions," she said.

At the makeshift dispensary sat Dr Suresh Abhiman Gavai from Mumbai. "I have a comfortable life. We don't need to be here," he said. "But when the system begins to fail young people, you cannot remain comfortable forever."

Several volunteers declined to reveal their identities, citing security concerns. They also alleged that the recent police checks have discouraged people from bringing in supplies. "Just today, an auto carrying food was stopped for identity verification. The driver got scared and wanted to leave without unloading it. These things discourage people who only want to help," one volunteer said.

The protest site has several posters with QR codes which, when scanned, allow access to a form where people are given the option to join the CJP team. The form also asks supporters for their basic details, including which state they are from and how they could help the party.

CJP spokesperson Ashutosh Ranka alleged, "The police have been keeping surveillance on who is helping us with the tent, the stage, water, food -- everything. People like Junaid bhai have been helping us arrange for food. A few days ago, someone arranged for mattresses for protesters. Everything here is being done by ordinary people for each other," he said.

Ranka said the party's leadership has been stationed at the protest site almost round the clock since the agitation began. "We sleep here alongside the protesters and manage everything in shifts. We use public toilets to bathe. A few days ago I was unwell, so I rested briefly at a friend's place, but otherwise all of us stay here. It's all being managed on an ad hoc basis," he said.

He added that the party's membership drive has so far received around 10 lakh registrations since late May.

(with inputs from Arhaan Saha)

Mumbai fire brigade gets 1st woman driver-operator

Richa.Pinto@timesofindia.com

TRAILBLAZER: Pallavi Patil drives 29-ft-long fire engines

Mumbai: When you see a fire engine racing through Mumbai's crowded streets with its sirens blaring next time, it could have a trailblazer at the wheel. On June 18, Mumbai Fire Brigade appointed Pallavi Patil, 29, as its first-ever woman driver-cum-operator, a historic milestone in the civic body's century-old history.

Attached to Bandra (W) fire station, Patil had been serving as a firewoman since joining the brigade in 2017. Her new post is the culmination of a dream that began far from Mumbai — on the dusty roads of her native village in Ahilyanagar. "I always loved driving," Patil said. During her Std 10th vacation, she persuaded a relative to let her learn driving in his Hyundai i20. Soon, she graduated to driving small goods vehicles.

"It was purely out of interest. I never imagined then that one day I would be driving a fire engine," Patil said, adding that it was her father's dream that got her enrolled into the fire brigade.

"My father always wanted to join the Indian Army, but family responsibilities meant he had to stay back and continue farming. About a decade ago, he came across a newspaper advertisement inviting women to join Mumbai Fire Brigade. He encouraged me to apply, believing the job would be life-changing," said Patil, a BSc graduate from Pune University. Patil's parents are farmers in their native village.

"He told me it would give me the opportunity not only to save human lives but also those of voiceless animals. That belief came true just last week when our team was called to rescue a cat stranded in a housing society," she added.

Islam convert cannot claim BC status: HC

K.Kaushik@timesofindia.com

Madurai: Holding that a convert to Islam cannot claim the status of Backward Class Muslim, Madras high court struck down a 2024 govt order (GO) which allows persons from Backward Classes, Most Backward Classes, Denotified Communities and Scheduled Castes to be treated as Backward Class Muslims after conversion to Islam.

The court was hearing the petition filed in 2022 by N Sameer Ahamed of Tuticorin district. The petitioner was born to a Hindu couple in 1993 and was named as Paramasivam. In 2015, the petitioner embraced Islam and also changed his name to Sameer Ahamed. He married a woman as per Islamic rites and customs in 2016 and has two children. He applied for a community certificate certifying him as 'Muslim Lebbai' (BC Muslim). The petitioner claims to follow the faith of Lebbai Muslims. His application was rejected by the Kayathar tahsildar. Challenging the same, the petitioner filed the present petition.

The petitioner stated that as per the 2024 GO a convert to Islam from Backward Classes, Most Backward Classes, Denotified Communities or Scheduled Castes may be treated as BC Muslim for availing the benefit of reservation and, he may be issued with community certificate as belonging to one of the notified seven sects.

The state submitted that a convert from a forward community to Islam would not get the BC Muslim tag. Only those who already enjoyed the benefit of quota would not lose it on account of conversion to Islam.

Op Sindoor: Sergeant honoured

▸ Continued from page 1

Sergeant Surendra Kumar was posthumously awarded the Vayu Medal for his service in the IAF. Op Sindoor was launched on May 7, 2025. The armed forces struck nine terror infrastructure targets in Pakistan and PoK to eliminate over 100 terrorists. India and Pakistan agreed to halt military action on May 10.

The names of all six personnel have been inscribed on wall no. '3D' of Tyag Chakra (Circle of Sacrifice) under year 2025 at the National War Memorial near India Gate. These names have also been published on the website of the National War Memorial.

Basmati exports defy US-Iran war

Ikhhlaq.Aujla @timesofindia.com

Chandigarh: Despite the US–Iran war disrupting trade in the final quarter, India's basmati rice exports rose more than 7.5% by volume in the 2025–26 financial year.

According to data from Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics compiled by Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority, export volume reached 65.2 lakh metric tonnes (LMT), marking an increase of more than 4.5 LMT in the previous year.

However, due to a sharp depreciation of the Indian rupee against the US dollar, total export value dipped slightly by 0.3% (approx. Rs 173.7 crore) to around Rs 50,138.2 crore, down from Rs 50,312 crore in 2024–25.

India exported basmati rice to 154 countries, matching the previous year's footprint. Saudi Arabia remained the top buyer, importing more than 10.5 LMT valued at around Rs 8,323.9 crore, compared to 11.7 LMT the previous year. Despite geopolitical tensions, Iran followed closely, increasing its imports to roughly 10 LMT valued at Rs 6,971.4 crore, up from over 8.5 LMT. Iraq ranked third, purchasing around 7.6 LMT valued at about Rs 5,582.5 crore, down from 9 LMT.

Among the top importing nations by volume and value were the UAE at 5.3 LMT (Rs 4,133.9 crore) and Yemen at 3.9 LMT (Rs 2,864.3 crore).

Vijay's movie producer named TN spl rep to Delhi

Shanmughasundaram.J @timesofindia.com

Chennai: Chief minister C Joseph Vijay's 'Jana Nayagan' movie producer and businessman **Venkat Narayana K** has been appointed as a special representative of Tamil Nadu govt in New Delhi, a posting which is equivalent to that of a cabinet minister. DMK, AIADMK and BJP have criticised the move, saying Narayana was a native of Karnataka. An order issued by chief secretary M Sai Kumar said sanction was accorded for the creation of the temporary post for a year.

The terms and conditions of Narayana's appointment would be issued later, said the chief secretary. Narayana had accompanied Vijay when he called on Governor R V Arlekar in May to stake claim to form the govt. This is the third posting granted to individuals close to Vijay.

SC bench revives 2005 petition of homebuyer

▸ Continued from page 1

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and V Mohana revived the 2005 consumer complaint filed by the homebuyer before the district consumer forum and asked it to decide within a year whether there was in fact any delay, whether such delay was attributable to the respondent, whether the appellant had accepted possession unconditionally, and whether any compensation is payable are all matters which require adjudication on merits.

"The claim of the appellant for compensation on account of alleged delay in handing over possession has neither been accepted nor rejected after evidence. Equally, the defence of the respondent society has also not been examined on merits. These issues could not have been concluded at the threshold by holding that the appellant ceased to be a consumer merely because possession had been delivered before the complaint was filed. In such circumstances, it would not be appropriate for this court to record any finding on the factual controversy between the parties," the bench said.

Adjudicating on what should be given primacy – arbitration clause in agreement or Consumer Protection Act – the bench said the 1986 Act creates a special and additional remedy for consumers and the jurisdiction so conferred could not be displaced merely by reference to an arbitration agreement between the parties.

"Once that mechanism is validly invoked and the complaint is admitted, the consumer cannot be driven out of that forum merely because the agreement between the parties contains an arbitration clause. A private contractual clause cannot be permitted to defeat the continued operation of a statutory remedy which Parliament has expressly made additional to other remedies under Section 3 of the 1986 Act," it said.

Naga group rejects KZC statement, seeks justice

▸ Continued from page 1

In a statement, Ansam said KZC remarks "neither constitutes an apology nor an admission of the unlawful and inhumane crime committed by KNF(P) and Leilon Vaiphei Kuki villagers on 13 May, 2026". Ansam said it viewed the statement "not as an act of repentance but as an affront that aggravates the pain and anguish already suffered by the Naga people."

"The derogatory and contemptuous use of the term 'Katcha Nagas' by these nomadic leaders, who are also refugees historically, is wholly unacceptable, historically untenable and profoundly offensive. It amounts to a direct challenge against the identity, history and dignity of the Naga people. Far from demonstrating remorse, the use of such pejorative and concocted nomenclature following a barbaric crime committed by the Kuki perpetrators reveals a disturbing persistence of prejudice and communal disdain," the Ansam statement said.

IANS

Manipur CM Yumnam Khemchand Singh during a drug awareness event in in Imphal on Friday

Ansam said the killing of the six hostages took place in Leilon Vaiphei, which it described as a Kuki village located within ancestral Naga territory "inherited and preserved through generations of Naga forefathers."

It also sought clarity on whether the "apology" issued by the Kuki-Zo Council (KZC) was tendered on behalf of those directly involved in the killings, or whether the council itself bore responsibility or association with the crime.

Ansam said Nagas were not involved in the killing of three Thadou church leaders. "The unfortunate incident reportedly occurred between Kotzim and Kotlen Kuki village areas, locations where Nagas neither exercise access or influence. Any attempt to implicate the Nagas in that incident is entirely baseless, malicious and intended solely to manufacture communal animosity through misinformation," it stated.

Calling on the Manipur govt and the Govt of India, Ansam said authorities must act with urgency. "Those responsible for the abduction and brutal killing of the six innocent Naga hostages must be brought before the law without delay. Justice delayed in a matter of such gravity would represent a profound failure of the rule of law and a disservice to the principles of democratic governance," it asserted, adding, "genuine reconciliation can only emerge from truth, accountability, respect for identity, admittance of the historical facts and the uncompromising administration of justice."

Hosps told to publish post-transplant result

▸ Continued from page 1

National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (NOTTO) director Dr Anil Kumar directed state and UT authorities to ensure every transplant hospital prominently displays post-transplant outcome data on its website and submits complete and timely follow-up data to the National Organ and Tissue Transplant Registry.

In his representation to the health minister, Chowta had flagged gaps in tracking long-term kidney transplant outcomes, citing a report submitted by two Mangaluru-based citizens. He said public attention largely focuses on successful transplants, while long-term complications, graft failures and post-transplant deaths remain inadequately tracked.

The letter also highlighted the absence of a national registry to monitor long-term outcomes, arguing that greater transparency would help patients make informed decisions.

Dr Anupam Roy, the additional director of nephrology and kidney transplant at Aakash Hospital in Dwarka said: "Making transplant outcomes public is a landmark step towards transparency and accountability. It will empower patients with objective information...However, these results must be interpreted in the context of patient complexity and risk profile".

NOTTO said 824 transplant centres are currently linked to the organ and tissue transplant registry and are required to record transplant and follow-up data through designated login credentials. Comprehensive reporting, it said, would strengthen monitoring of transplant outcomes, improve traceability and support evidence-based policy decisions.

Under the standard reporting format, hospitals will have to disclose the number and percentage of patients alive, deaths, graft failures and patients lost to follow-up at discharge, six months, one year, three years and five years after transplantation.

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In her stillness, astounding clarity.
The body softens.
The mind calms.
A calming cognition that brings her truth to herself.
And in this moment of being,
She emerges.

Ever graceful, a journey revealed,
where all things converge before they unfold.
Fluidness in her every breath,
Deep blue eyes drenched in soft stillness,
Kundan-inculcation grounds her in pure alignment.

She returns to her centre.
And She Emerges.

emergence

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TIMES GLOBAL

THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | SATURDAY, JUNE 27, 2026

IF THE HIGHEST AIM OF A CAPTAIN WERE TO PRESERVE HIS SHIP, HE WOULD KEEP IT IN PORT FOREVER — THOMAS AQUINAS

KATY PERRY DROPS HER NEW MUSIC VIDEO 'WATCH IT BURN' PACKED WITH EASTER EGGS TARGETING EX ORLANDO BLOOM

LIONEL RICHIE, 77, POSTPONES SHOWS AFTER FEELING 'DIZZY' AND CUTTING CONCERT SHORT ON FIRST NIGHT OF TOUR

Toll in Venezuela earthquakes climbs to at least 920; 3,360 hurt

50,000+ People Missing: UN Aid Chief; Int'l Rescue Teams Arrive

La Guaira/Caracas: The official death toll from twin earthquakes that flattened parts of Caracas and surrounding areas rose to 920, lawmaker Jorge Rodriguez, president of the national assembly, said on Friday.

The govt has estimated hundreds of people still trapped and missing nearly two days after magnitude 7.2 and 7.5 tremors struck about 160 km west of Caracas.

A website set up to take reports of people still unaccounted for had over 50,000 listed as of midday on Friday. The UN's aid chief gave a similar tally. Foreign rescue teams and aid began arriving on Friday, as desperate Venezuelans and a growing number of foreign volunteers raced to find survivors trapped under rubble.

Rodriguez said 871 international rescue workers were in the country on Friday. The US Geological Survey has predicted high potential for more than 10,000 deaths, which would place the quakes among the deadliest earthquakes in Latin America in the last century.

Venezuelans, meanwhile, took the search for missing loved ones into their own hands on Friday, saying they have not seen state rescue teams despite authorities projecting an image of a robust govt response. Desperate families across northern Venezuela searched in the ruins of buildings for kin and whatever remained of their lives.

AFP

Reuters

A building destroyed during in La Guaira state; people work to rescue a person from the rubble of a building

Nazareth Jimenez sobbed into the shoulder of a loved one as she watched neighbours try to cut through slabs of concrete with power tools in a building reduced to a mountain of debris. "My god, how are we going to get them out of there?" she murmured. She was in the hardest-hit northern state of La Guaira, just north of the capital of Caracas, and was wracked with anxiety as she waited to see if her siblings, nephews, nieces and friends would emerge from the debris alive. "We're making a call for help to govts of countries across the world," Jimenez said. "There are still people alive in there."

At the same time, acting President Delcy Rodriguez sought to project the idea that authorities were mounting a full response, and on Friday she welcomed the arrival of rescuers and humanitarian aid from all over the world. "We are going to rescue the people who are trapped," she said.

Foreign rescue teams and aid were arriving on Friday in Venezuela. Several countries including India and Switzerland sent in rescue teams and supplies. Mexico has sent 250 rescuers, El Salvador 188 and Spain nearly 100, and a Colombian air force plane carrying 63 rescue crew was on its way on Friday morning. The US has said it is mobilising $150 million in aid, and eased longtime sanctions on Venezuela.

Many were stunned Thursday as they saw buildings reduced to skeletons, with furniture hanging out of windows and helicopters circling overhead. Buildings were flattened and streets cracked open. A mother of three, Dayana Delgado, asked where the heavy machinery was that govt officials had promised and said residents were the ones digging through crumpled buildings. "I want to know where my child is, if he's trapped or in a shelter," she said of her missing 8-year-old son.

6.6 quake hits Philippines: A magnitude 6.6 earthquake struck the southern Philippine island of Mindanao Friday, seismology agency Phivolcs said. It said that aftershocks were expected, but there was no threat of a tsunami. AGENCIES

How some smartphones warned of earthquake

Paris: Many social media users in Venezuela have reported receiving alerts on Android smartphones moments before Wednesday's quake. Google's Android and Apple's iOS, both include the option to display govt alerts for emergencies like quakes.

How it works: Almost all smartphones contain an accelerometer, a movement sensor used for tasks like flipping the screen when users turn it sideways. That same sensor "can also detect the ground shaking from an earthquake," Google wrote in a July 2025 blog post. Accelerometers can spot potential earthquakes' fast-moving initial "P" wave, sending information about the tremor to a Google server. By rapidly cross-referencing many such reports, the system can "confirm that an earthquake is happening and estimate its location," Google said.

How effective it is: Google said last year that its systems had already sent 790 million alerts to individual phones, warning of over 2,000 potentially dangerous earthquakes detected from April 2021.

What about Apple: Beyond govt warnings, Apple says on its website that users in the US and Taiwan can also receive alerts from other "alert originators" about earthquakes. AFP

Venezuelans turn to social media in search for missing

Mexico City: A father holds the hand of his daughter dressed as a fairy. A 24-year-old man in a pilot uniform stares proudly at the camera. A family embraces on a soccer field. These are among the images posted by relatives within Venezuela and abroad searching for their missing loved ones.

While some rushed to search beneath the rubble of collapsed buildings, others created digital flyers on WhatsApp, Facebook and X with their relatives' details. Among them was Vanesa Marcano, 31, who posted photos from Madrid of her uncle and aunt, who live in La Guaira state which suffered some of the heaviest damage and casualties. Marcano posted the images in the hopes that they were only unreachable due to damaged communication lines.

Jhoyser Concalves, a Venezuelan from the northern coastal city of Catia La Mar, was talking to his partner and her daughter just minutes before the shaking. It was the last he heard from them. Concalves posted a flyer reading "MISSING" on X and Facebook in a desperate attempt to find them.

The search was complicated by the country's restrictions on social media. On Thursday, the UN human rights mission in Venezuela called on govt to lift local restrictions on social media. AP

Former US NSA pleads guilty to mishandling classified docus

John Bolton, a former national security adviser for President Trump who has since become one of his fiercest critics, pleaded guilty in federal court on Friday to mishandling classified information and faces up to five years in prison. "I'm sorry for it," Bolton told US district judge Theodore Chuang.

There were reports that Bolton would plead guilty under a deal with prosecutors that included a sentencing range from no prison time to as many as five years behind bars, with the final sentence to be determined by a judge. As part of the agreement, Bolton agreed to pay a $2.25 million fine. Bolton, 77, must make half that payment within five days of sentencing and full payment within 90 days of sentencing. He also committed to up to 100 hours of community service and to meet with intelligence and justice department officials for a debriefing. He will also forfeit his pension. Chuang scheduled sentencing for Oct. REUTERS

Trump: 100% tax on European imports if tax on digital services imposed

Washington: President Donald Trump on Friday threatened a 100% tax on imports from any country that imposes a tax on digital services from US companies.

In a post on social media, Trump took aim at European countries that he said are discussing "imminent" implementation of taxes on American companies.

"Please let this statement serve to represent that any Country that imposes such a Tax will immediately be met with a 100% TARIFF on any and all Goods sent to the United States of America," Trump wrote. He added that the new tax would supersede any previously negotiated trade deals. Trump said the penalty would apply to any country that moves forward with such a tax, but he singled out European nations in his post.

Trump has repeatedly pushed against foreign efforts to tax or regulate American tech giants. Last year he threatened new tariffs on any country that moved to do so. AP

Tehran reasserts its right to control shipping in Hormuz

Iran Says US And GCC Call For Free And Unrestricted Navigation In Strait Is Interventionist And Provocative

Dubai/London: Tehran reasserted its right on Friday to control shipping in the Strait of Hormuz and warned Gulf states against siding with the US, a day after an attack on a ship near Oman highlighted the fragility of a preliminary deal to end the Iran war.

Iran was responding to what it called an "interventionist, irresponsible and provocative" joint statement by the US and six Gulf states that rejected Iran's insistence that it could charge tolls on vessels transiting the strait.

"Safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz cannot be guaranteed under ambiguous arrangements, parallel routes or decision-making that does not take Iran's role as a coastal state into account," deputy foreign minister Kazem Gharibabadi said on X.

Underlining the risks facing shipping, Iranian state TV said three foreign tankers attempting what it called an "unauthorised passage" of the strait were turned back after a warning from the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. It gave no further details. Asked about the matter, a US official said: "We are aware of these reports and looking into them."

Oil prices dropped by more than 3% on Friday, on course for steep weekly losses despite the conflicting interpretations of last week's interim deal between Iran and the US and a slowdown in traffic through the strait. Saudi Aramco resumed crude loadings on Friday at its Ras Tanura terminal in the Gulf, the world's biggest oil port, after a nearly four-month halt, shipping data showed. Fertiliser shipments through the strait have also picked up, helping to assuage concerns about a spike in global food prices because of the waterway's prolonged closure.

Reuters

Saudi Aramco resumed crude loading on Friday at its Ras Tanura terminal in the Gulf after a nearly four-month halt

Trump blames Iran for drone strike on cargo ship in Hormuz

US President Donald Trump on Friday blamed Iran for carrying out a drone strike on a cargo ship in the Strait of Hormuz, calling it a "foolish violation" of the ceasefire agreement with the US. Trump said one drone hit the upper deck of the ship and "damage was done," but the ship was able to proceed. He added that the US shot down three other drones. His post on social media did not identify the ship or the time of the strike, but on Thursday the British military said a vessel was hit by a projectile off the coast of Oman. AP

US secretary of state Marco Rubio — wrapping up a tour of the Gulf to reassure nervous regional allies about the interim pact — told reporters on Thursday that if Iran threatened or blocked ships in the strait, "we're going to have a problem." In a joint statement, Rubio and the Gulf Cooperation Council called for "free, unconditional, and unrestricted navigation" in the strait without tolls or "attempts to assert control". They said a lasting peace must address Iran's ballistic missiles, drones and support for proxy groups.

Iran's foreign ministry responded on Friday by saying the US military presence in the Gulf was the source of regional insecurity and division, and that the strait should be governed by Iran and Oman in line with the terms of the interim deal. "We warn against the continuation of hostile and interventionist policies in the region," it said. REUTERS

Beijing expands Indian Ocean footprint with B'desh port deal

Ahsan Tasnim

Dhaka: Bangladesh PM Tarique Rahman met Chinese President Xi Jinping Friday, wrapping up his five-day visit to China, during which the two sides formalised a deal to develop an economic zone near Mongla port, replacing a previously proposed Indian-backed venture.

The land for the zone at Mongla — Bangladesh's second-largest seaport after Chittagong — was initially earmarked for India, but was delisted by the Muhammad Yunus interim govt in 2025 as ties deteriorated following Sheikh Hasina's ouster as PM in 2024. The project could expand China's strategic footprint in Bay of Bengal and wider Indian Ocean region — where Beijing has invested in ports from Gwadar in Pakistan to Djibouti in East Africa.

China supports Bangladesh's new govt in its smooth administration and stands ready to carry out high-quality Belt and Road Cooperation with Dhaka, Xi told Tarique, while assuring the PM that China is willing to map out key cooperation with Bangladesh and tap into the potential for collaboration in green and low-carbon development, digital economy, information technology, AI and other fields.

The two sides also agreed to jointly advance the Chinese Economic and Industrial Zone in Chittagong, while China pledged support for the Teesta river management and restoration project — a part of Beijing's bid to seek deeper cooperation in integrated water resources management with Bangladesh that shares 54 rivers with India.

"No matter how the world changes, China will not waver in its commitment to the overall direction of Bangladesh-China friendly relations, and will always be a trustworthy good friend, good neighbour, and good partner of Bangladesh," according to a joint statement. It was also agreed to strengthen cooperation in maritime affairs, agriculture, education, trade and investment, and technology sharing, and further advance development of the China-Myanmar-Bangladesh Economic Corridor, it said.

Mystery shrouds small plane's crash into Beijing's tallest tower

Beijing: A small aircraft crashed into Beijing's tallest building on Friday, according to a witness account and media reports, triggering evacuations and drawing a large police and ambulance presence in the city's business district. Photos show what appeared to be a hole in the glass facade on one side of the CITIC Tower, also known as China Zun.

A person working in the building told AP an aircraft crashed into the skyscraper, and a fire alarm was triggered. The person spoke on condition of anonymity out of fear of retaliation. Incidents such as crashes are considered sensitive by Chinese authorities.

Images and videos shared on social media appeared to show debris from a small aircraft near the skyscraper. While the images were consistent with the location, it was not possible to independently confirm their authenticity and they were quickly removed from the internet.

Hong Kong-based newspaper South China Morning Post reported that a small airplane crashed into the tower, which stands at 528 meters (1,732 feet.) Heavy police presence, as well as fire engines and ambulances were seen outside the building. Onlookers gathered to take pictures, but police asked them to stop photographing and leave the area. The cause of the crash was not clear, and authorities have not issued a statement. AP

AP

AFP

South China Morning Post reported that a small airplane crashed into the CITIC Tower, also known as China Zun, in Beijing. Photos showed a hole or broken glass on one side of the building, which stands at 1,732 feet

Germany marks record June heat: Weather agency

Berlin: Germany saw temperatures top 40°C at several locations on Friday, according to preliminary weather service data, breaking the previous recorded high of 39.6°C for the month of June.

Five different weather stations saw readings over 40°, including 40.9°C in the western city of Saarbruecken, according to preliminary data, the German Weather Service (DWD) told AFP.

Germany is expected to continue sweltering under record heat over the weekend, with the DWD warning that local temperatures in parts of the country could hit 42°C on both Saturday and Sunday.The highest temperature on record in Germany in any month is 41.2°C, which was recorded in July 2019. AFP

UK farms to trial fertiliser invented by two Indians

Naomi Canton

London: More than 90 farms across the UK are set to participate in the trial of a natural fertiliser developed by two Indians from Kerala who founded an agri-biotech company in Britain. The liquid bio-fertiliser known as "Reclaimer" helps crops withstand extreme conditions such as flooding and drought without the use of harsh chemicals.

It was developed by Reclaimer Industries, a graduate startup in Hertfordshire, co-founded by Adwaith Suresh (28), who graduated from the University of Hertfordshire in 2023 with an MSc in finance and investment banking and Abhijith Padukana, a biotechnologist. Reclaimer is being developed with ecosystem support from the university and the company is now preparing for regulatory nod.

The technique focuses on converting agricultural byproducts into biologically active liquid fertilisers through controlled microbial fermentation. The treatment helps increase organic matter in the soil to improve long-term nutrient availability. "Abhijith and I came up with this idea after realising how poor the soil conditions were following extreme weather in Kerala," Suresh said. "We realised that even after rapid advances in digital technologies, many farms still lacked resilient soil to protect crops. Together we developed a regenerative solution made from up-cycled agricultural waste and we were able to adapt our solution to UK soil conditions."

DAILY PLANET

AFP

BEAT THE HEAT: People cool off at a mist fountain in Paris on Friday

Charles will not live at Buckingham Palace after refit, officials say

King Charles III will not live at Buckingham Palace after the completion of a 10-year, 369 million-pound ($487 million) refurbishment programme as the monarchy seeks to increase public access to the historic building that has been the centre of royal life for almost 200 years. Royal officials stressed that the king and Queen Camilla would continue to work out of the palace, which will remain "the ceremonial and operational centre" of the monarchy. But for the rest of Charles' reign, the king and queen will remain in nearby Clarence House. "It is and will remain Monarchy HQ, the crown jewel of our national buildings," said James Chalmers, the senior royal official responsible for managing the king's financial affairs. The decision was announced Thursday during a briefing on royal finances at which Charles became the first British monarch to reveal the taxes he paid to the govt. The king paid 12.9 million pounds ($16.1m) in income and capital gains taxes in the 2024-25 financial year, up from 11.7 million pounds the previous year. With 775 rooms, the palace also provides office space for the royal bureaucracy and hosts lavish state dinners for visiting presidents and potentates.

Japan 'snow monkey' park to cap visitors: A Japanese park famous for "snow monkeys" soaking in hot springs will cap daily numbers after a surge in visitors and ca-

ses of bad behaviour including bathing with the animals, an official said Friday. Nestled in a valley with an altitude of nearly 2,800 feet in the central Nagano region, Jigokudani Yaen-Koen is inhabited by wild Japanese macaques that regularly bathe in its hot volcanic spring waters. On frigid, snowy winter days, "many monkeys are seen soaking in the hot spring," its website says. Touted as a "monkey paradise", the park is the "world's only place" to offer such a sight, its website claims.

Married to an Indian, Vance tries to make India-hater Nixon great again

Chidanand Rajghatta | TNN

Washington: US Vice President JD Vance's journey from "Hillbilly Elegy" to Nixon eulogy on Thursday involved — while being married to an accomplished Indian woman — praising a former American president who was not only a notorious India-hater but who also denigrated Indian women in the vilest terms.

Standing before an appreciative audience at the Richard Nixon Presidential Library while promoting his new memoir, "Communion: Finding My Way Back to Faith", Vance attempted something many historians have long warned against: making the 37th president, the only one in US history to resign in disgrace from office mid-term, sound less like the patron saint of political scandal and more like an unfairly maligned visionary.

"I've always liked Richard Nixon," Vance declared, describing the president as a "political genius" whose reputation is enjoying a deserved "renaissance". Watergate, he argued, would barely survive a modern news cycle. "If Watergate happened tomorrow, it would be like a 12-hour news story," he said, maintaining that the notion it could topple a presidency seems "crazy" by today's standards.

It was an extraordinary sales pitch, not so much for his book but for Nixon himself. Vance even saw in himself a likeness of Nixon: young senator, vice president, best-selling author, and perpetual target of the media. "It kind of sounds like JD Vance," he joked.

JD Vance and Richard Nixon

Outside the Nixon Library, critics wondered whether this was nostalgia or historical revisionism. Among the sharpest responses came from former Obama adviser David Axelrod, who called Vance's remarks "mind-boggling" while reminding Americans that Watergate involved far more than an embarrassing burglary: Nixon's aides authorised the break-in at Democratic National Committee (DNC) headquarters, attempted to use the CIA to obstruct the FBI investigation, maintained a White House-controlled slush fund, weaponised the IRS against political opponents, and orchestrated a cover-up that sent senior administration officials, including the attorney general and the White House chief of staff, to prison. Nixon himself was captured on his secret tapes participating in the cover-up before resigning in disgrace.

Others suggested that Vance had inadvertently made a different point altogether: that the sheer volume of modern political scandals and controversies has lowered America's outrage threshold. Columnist David French quipped that Watergate would indeed be a 12-hour story today — not because Nixon was innocent, but because contemporary politics has normalised egregious behaviour that once shocked the nation.

For Indian readers, however, Vance's Nixon revival — at a time ties with New Delhi are sketchy at best — comes with particularly awkward historical baggage. Nixon's hostility toward New Delhi was recorded in declassified White House tapes, preserving an astonishing catalogue of racial slurs and personal abuse directed at India, Indians, and PM Indira Gandhi during the 1971 Bangladesh crisis. Nixon and his national security adviser, Henry Kissinger, repeatedly referred to India Gandhi as an "old witch" and a "b***h", and Indians were dismissed as "slippery", "treacherous", and "b*****ds". Nixon described Indian women in deeply offensive and sexist terms that remain among the ugliest remarks ever recorded by an American president about India.

Those personal prejudices coincided with policies that decimated US-India ties. Even as Pakistan's military under General Yahya Khan carried out a genocide in East Pakistan that sent millions of refugees into India, the Nixon administration tilted decisively toward Islamabad, dispatching the US Seventh Fleet into the Bay of Bengal to attempt to bully New Delhi during the conflict.

India ultimately prevailed militarily, Bangladesh was born, but Nixon's Pakistan policy became a lasting source of mistrust in Indo-US relations, a sentiment that is currently resurfacing given the Trump-Vance declaration of love for a country and its military that New Delhi accuses of perpetrating terrorist attacks on India.

Bangalore Times

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A thought for today

You better cut the pizza in four pieces because I'm not hungry enough to eat six

YOGI BERRA

Eats My Life!

Perks and perils of being a VIP's food-taster

Anyone else would call it a working holiday, but staff at Maharashtra Food and Drug Administration is hard to please. As **TOI** reported on Friday, officials tasked with tasting food at VIP events are cribbing they feel like guinea pigs. Whoever heard of guinea pigs sampling 10 dishes at a time, thrice a day, for up to 13 days together? And they get to open and taste the giveaway goodies too – desi laddus to imported chocolates. Since when has govt staff become so waistline conscious?

Turns out, it's not their waist but their life these officials are worried about. They're not roped in to play Gordon Ramsay, but Halotus, the man whose job was to keep poison out of Roman emperor Claudius's food, by tasting it first. It's a different matter that he didn't. Point is, there's no joy in sampling rasmalai when you know it might have been poisoned. No matter how long you do this job, you will never be reconciled to it. Margot Woelk was one of Hitler's 15 women food tasters, and the only one who lived to tell her tale. Although she worked as taster for over two years, and the food was great, she said they cried after every meal "because we were so glad to have survived".

Time was when food-tasting had its perks. For example, Sultan Iltutmish made Malik Tajuddin, his *chashnigir* or taster, commander of the stable. But the perils were grave too. When Ibrahim Lodi's mother tried to poison Babur via his *chashnigir,* Babur saw to it that four of the conspirators were cut up, flayed, shot, and trampled, respectively. He liked variety. John Nicholson didn't. In 1857, he hanged without trial his Indian cooks who had poisoned the officers' soup. Now there are no perks, only perils. The West has given up VIP food-tasting, we should too.

Heaven On Earth

Filching divine wealth is as old as organised religion

Gods have watched humans divert sacred funds towards earthly ends from the time organised religion struck gold, and the first place of worship was built, across faiths. The dip & nip 'tradition', or devoted hustle, of keepers of faith is almost par for the course. The devotee knows, temple kartas know, god, certainly, knows. Small amounts are skimmed, consistently. Temple heists are mostly always inside jobs. So, no one is really surprised that administrators of Ayodhya temple smacked their lips as funds and valuables piled up. No mean amount – donations made were reportedly to the tune of ₹83cr in a mere 11 months, plus gold and silver ornaments, silver bricks (reportedly melted), on and on. Oh the torture, to turn away from moh-maya! As they say, more the moolah, more the maya.

Ornaments pilfered, donation boxes skimmed, funds for festivals rerouted – for not a few 'devotees', devotion to lining pockets has a stronger magnetic pull than devotion to any deity. Temptation and betrayal. Or maybe, they'll argue, all of this is just being one with the deity. After all, for those who have sacrificed so much to serve god, surely what is his or hers, is ours? Alas, laws of the land don't agree. Auditors and investigators always know the disappearing sum is never divine intervention, but internal diversion. Gods don't care for gold. But temple caretakers nearly always do. To seek god may be human, but to have the keys to the donation box promises heaven on earth.

The Sun King Of Mar-a-Lago

On a presidency with no limits, only yes-men

Peace on earth. That's what Trump told reporters his new year resolution was, at the Mar-a-Lago party to ring in 2026. But the year has gone quite the other way, and some folks say this is all because of wily Netanyahu. Nope, insists a new book from *NYT* journalists ***Maggie Haberman*** and ***Jonathan Swan***. They establish in ***Regime Change: Inside the Imperial Presidency of Donald Trump***, how the man is running his second term with this central thought: There has never been an American president as powerful as him. "This time is about legacy," he says. "This time he would unleash his inner Louis XIV," say the authors.

In an interview he gives to Haberman and Swan in March, shortly before their book goes to press, he recites the names of those he has out-powered. Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan, Hitler, Mao, Stalin, Napoleon...the moral distinctions don't interest him. Only that *his* economic and military reach is global, bigger, better. "No other president could do some of the shit I'm doing." No one anywhere ever has. "Essentially I won every fucking time."

mindfield
SHORT TAKES ON BIG IDEAS

Crazy tariffs. Threats to annex ally territories. Extrajudicial killings at sea. Considering the suspension of habeas corpus. ICE gone rogue. Epstein files. Iran war. Inflation. It's not that all this is not taking a toll on Trump's popularity. It's that he no longer cares. And the price of staying in his inner circle is to fall in line with his outlook. He will no longer stand anybody resisting like Rex Tillerson and James Mattis once did.

There's now an Ultimate Fighting Championship feel across both the cabinet and White House staff. "Fundamentally, Trump enjoyed toying with people." It's not just Vance and Rubio who're pitted against each other. The book describes, for example, how a DOGE meeting in the Oval Office goes. "Fuck you!" the treasury secretary says to Musk, who then leans into Bessent, "Say it louder, I can't hear you!" They repeat this riff, and shove at each other.

Flip side of playing everyone is how readily he gets played. Trump's tight with real estate mogul Steve Witkoff, and sends him to meet Putin alone. Witkoff reports back that Putin was so upset by the assassination attempt at Butler that he went to Mass to pray. "It seemed almost too easy to impress Trump."

His own family is doing great, from the overlap of business relationships and govt work. Acting as though the international system simply does not exist? "Nobody else could've done it." Abusing executive power to carry out vendettas against law firms and universities and the Smithsonian? Pushing the legal system to breaking point, by having govt stall and even defy court orders? The most pushback he's getting at his table is, "You know I think this is a bad idea, but if you want to do it I'll support you."

Tucker Carlson's repeated warnings against an Iran war are well known. "I know you're worried about it, but it's going to be okay," Trump said. Carlson asked how he knew. "Because it always is." Surviving several controversies, any one of which would have sunk another political career, is indeed Trump's superpower. There will, of course, be costs. But to be paid by others. Including Trump's own party and country.

Messi, Marx & Márquez

Kerala's love for football is not just about the beautiful game. It's wound up in the state's passion for 'revolutionary' politics & literature. Thus its fervent cheers for Latin American teams

Viju.B@timesofindia.com

Brazeelia has cheered for Brazil every World Cup. Her football-fanatic uncle named her after Brazil's capital Brasilia, albeit spelled differently. The Kozhikode resident was 20 when Brazil won its fourth World Cup, and ever since that watershed moment, the World Cup title has eluded the team. So whenever there is a Brazil match, she prays fervently that Neymar, Brazil's trump card, will have an injury-free run.

In 2011, IUML decided to field Brazeelia as a ward councillor in Nainamvalappu, a coastal hamlet known as Kerala's football village. This electoral ploy clicked and Brazeelia triumphed – in Nainamvalappu, every family breathes football; every street is decorated with huge hoardings of their favourite football icons, especially during World Cup. As night approaches, the entire village lights up with people coming out of their homes to watch the matches on giant LED screens, shouting, crying, and celebrating every victory and loss.

This is not an isolated phenomenon, as hundreds of villages and towns in Kerala replicate Nainamvalappu's ethos. They have giant cutouts of Messi, Neymar and Ronaldo smiling at you from paddy fields, water bodies, and even busy traffic junctions. Schools, hotels, bars, and auditoriums have been converted into public viewing galleries that run packed. The elderly, the middle-aged, and Gen Z watch these matches in a unique community viewing, and have heated post-match discussions into the morning.

Keralites have always been obsessed with three topics: politics, Pooram and football. Politics gets accentuated every assembly poll, mostly among middle-aged; Poorams attract young crowds, but are location-specific. It is football that has undoubtedly emerged as statewide obsession, where every person incarnates into a god of high expertise, waxing knowledge and wisdom that even Lionel Scaloni, Argentina's coach, would shudder to imagine.

This football-literate spectrum includes everyone from the local tea vendor to politicians, celebrities, and intellectuals, who can already provide you the final verdict if you care to listen. Writer NS Madhavan, who penned the cult short story *Higuita*, inspired by legendary Colombian goalkeeper's unorthodox keeping, has already predicted an Argentina-France final, repeat of the last World Cup.

Brazil and Argentina get maximum support, and their fan rivalry can be seen in the cut-out slugfest. At Munda village in Malappuram, when a 500-ft-long Brazil hoarding came up, the Argentina fan camp made a 602-ft-long hoarding, which they claim is world's longest single hoarding dedicated to any football team.

This fixation with Latin American culture extends to Kerala's Left politics and its literature of magic realism, with writers such as Márquez and Neruda becoming household names. What began as unbridled support for underdog nations who fought against colonisers soon got romanticised, conveniently forgetting the fact that nations like Argentina voted against several pro-Palestine resolutions in UNGA.

The beauty of the game broke such uncomfortable alignments. The Che Guevara tattoo on Maradona's biceps symbolised liberation. As he dribbled past opponents, decimating teams like England, his genius 'Hand of God' broke all barriers that ideologies could only dream of. Reason why Keralites can easily connect with the boisterous rhythm of the Latino samba drums is because Kerala's indigenous asura vadyam, the chenda, speaks a universal language – a celebration of this subaltern culture – and Latino football was a bodily extension of this poetry in motion.

Image: AI

Football was introduced to Kerala by British military. Yet, unlike West Bengal, with similar cultural affinities, Kerala never had a club culture. Locals played against Malabar Special Police in grounds adjacent to colonial barracks of Malappuram, many times barefoot, and won a few games. They were soon addicts of the dribbling game; their minor victories against the British were seen as resistance.

Football culture evolved post-Independence. Tournaments were organised in football season. Clubs and various govt institutions came to Kerala to participate in these tourneys. Trivandrum had the GV Raja Trophy, Kottayam had the Mammen Mappillai Trophy. Kochi had Nehru Cup, Thrissur Chakolas Cup, Kozhikode the Sait Nagjee Trophy, and Kollam and Kannur had the Sree Narayana Trophies.

Seven-a-side football tournaments began in Malappuram in 1952 to counter the lack of space – and brought football closer to home. Though not recognised by All India Football Federation, as the game is prone to physical injuries, these local tournaments became a hit.

Malabar's parched paddy fields were converted into floodlit grounds, and it has been so ever since, like a community gathering of festivities. Over time, club rivalry increased so much that sevens' players were brought in by local business groups from impoverished African countries. They were called 'Sudanis', a generic term, and were used as cheap crowd-pullers for these matches. The National Award-winning movie *Sudani from Nigeria* explores this ugly underbelly of sevens football – poor players were imported to satisfy egos of fanatic clubs and earn quick money, glossing over the poverty and unrest the players face in their countries.

Victory in the first Santosh Trophy boosted football in Kerala, which went on to win seven titles and make 17 appearances in the finals. National football players like Pappachan, U Sharaf Ali, and later IM Vijayan were roped in by football clubs in West Bengal, and this paved the way for youngsters to take up the game. Players of Kerala Blasters, wearing the yellow jersey, also had a huge fan following till the club's fortunes dipped recently.

Kerala is among the few states where football is the most popular game, in spite of Sanju Samson's large fan following. Though Pelé, Maradona and Ronaldo were household names for years, it was during World Cup 2014 that youngsters from Kerala began voluntary work for FIFA and came in close contact with players.

The eruption of hyperlocal celebrations and large community viewership, this World Cup, is due to the success of Qatar World Cup, where non-resident Keralites could not only watch matches live, but were also part of stadium management and logistics.

World Cup was a sort of homecoming for expats whose joy was reflected in their native state. This international exposure to live matches – with fans carrying Malayalam placards in the stadium – plus the deep digital penetration of Malayalis posting local celebrations, made Fifa acknowledge these trends in recent FB posts.

The latest Fifa post in Malayalam on Messi reads: "Evaney Padachu Vita Kadavlukku Pathil Pathu", which means, "The god who created Messi gets 10 out of 10." This recognition is, perhaps, a sporting catharsis to vent the disappointment of India's abysmal Fifa ranking, relegating us to the role of active viewers rather than real participants.

The Loneliness Inside A Full Life

Humans are built to be in union – whether divine, devotional, or shared between two people. The peculiar cruelty of our moment is that we are both the most alone and most connected generation in history

Sivakumar.Sundaram@timesofindia.com

Picture a Sunday evening in a crowded flat. The cooker is on its third whistle, a cousin is shouting cricket scores from the hall, exam timetables are stuck to the fridge, and the family WhatsApp group has pinged 40 times since lunch. In the middle of all that noise, a woman stands at the kitchen counter and feels something she would never say aloud – that it has been a long while since anyone truly *saw* her.

She is not abandoned. She is surrounded. And still, somewhere under the ribs, there is a quiet ache. We have a clumsy modern word for it now: Loneliness. But the ache is older than the word. It may be the oldest hunger we carry.

For six Saturdays now, over the last one year, this column has studied love mostly where it goes wrong – closeness that suffocates in *The Filter Coffee of Love*, expectations that harden into cages, ties that must finally be cut in *The Falling Dagger*, bonds that allow no exit, the mind's quiet turning after a love we did not choose to lose, boundaries as oxygen lines on a Mumbai balcony.

A reader's letter last week pulled me back to the question hiding underneath all the others. If love is this much trouble – this jealous, this fragile, this hard to hold – why do we keep reaching for it at all? Why does everyone, in the end, need a lover?

Because "lover" is a far larger word than we allow it to be. For some, the lover is the Divine itself. This is the love of Meera and Andal. For some, the lover is a guru – a voice, a pair of hands that point us gently back towards our own depths. And for most of us, the lover is a partner – a husband, wife, companion, man or woman according to one's own nature, a bond built quietly out of trust, respect, desire, the willingness to be known. The form changes, the need does not.

Of Life And Love
STORIES OF THE WAY WE ARE

We have shrunk the word *yog* to mats and 6am alarms, but at its root it means something simpler and far older. *Yuj* – to yoke, to join, to make two into one. The body and the mind carry a constant, low longing to find their other half. This is why love, in any of its forms, never feels like one more item added to a life. It feels like a homecoming.

Image: AI

A lover is simply whoever quiets the restless gap between what we are and what we keep reaching for.

This is not poetry alone. The longest study of human life ever attempted – Harvard's, now in its eighth decade, having followed hundreds of lives from youth into old age – set out to learn what makes us flourish. Not wealth, not fame, not even cholesterol turned out to be the great predictor of a long and contented life. It was the warmth of our close relationships. Loneliness, researchers now say without flinching, wears on the body somewhat as smoking does. The heart that lives outside of union does not merely grieve, it ages faster.

But there is a peculiar cruelty in our moment. Ours is not the loneliness of the deserted island. It is loneliness *inside a full life* – the crowded household, packed calendar, phone that buzzes all day with everyone, except the one person who might truly see us. We are the most connected generation in history and, by many counts, among the loneliest. Surveys of urban India keep finding the ache rising fastest among the young and the most digitally fluent. We have mistaken contact for communion. A hundred likes are not love, and being copied on the group is not the same as being known.

What of the sanyasi and monks who live long, serene lives with no partner at all? The renunciates have not killed the need for love, only redirected it, their lover is the Divine. And the same grace is open to those whom life has left unpartnered, for whatever reason or circumstance. There is someone waiting. Seek them, and take whatever form life allows, for no one is disqualified from union. We only arrive by different doors.

So how do we recognise the true lover when they arrive? Not by the heat of the desire they stir, but by the stillness they bring. The true lover is the one in whose presence the war inside us finally goes quiet. A lover is how the human being completes itself. We were not built to be self-sufficient, but to be in union.

So, choose love in whatever shape your life offers it – divine, devotional, or shared between two people – and then guard it like the oxygen line it is. Because a life in union is not a life with one more thing added to it. It is a life that has, at last, come home.

Calvin & Hobbes

THIS NEW ISSUE OF CHEWING MAGAZINE TELLS HOW TO SET UP A MANDIBULAR FITNESS REGIME!
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IT'S A GRUELING WORKOUT, BUT YOU BUILD STRENGTH AND ENDURANCE, SO YOU CAN COME THROUGH IN A CLINCHER.
I'M SURE THE GLORY MAKES IT ALL WORTHWHILE.
PLUS, YOU DEVELOP THAT "CHEWER'S JAW" THAT DRIVES THE GIRLS WILD.

Sacredspace

Humanism is the only — i would go so far as saying the final — resistance we have against the inhuman practices and injustices that disfigure human history.

Edward W Said

Bees And Flies: Secrets To A Positive Mind

Swami Sukhabodhananda

Life is not determined by what happens to us; it is determined by how we respond to what happens. The quality of our life depends on the quality of our mind. A positive mind creates opportunities, joy and growth, while a negative mind creates suffering even in the midst of abundance. To explain this simple truth, i often use the example of a bee and a fly.

Observe a bee carefully. It goes from one flower to another flower, collecting nectar. As it moves, it performs cross-pollination and contributes to the growth of nature. The bee searches for beauty, fragrance and sweetness. It is naturally drawn towards what nourishes life.

Now look at a fly. A fly may sit on a flower for a moment, but very soon it flies to a gutter. From there, it may go to food offered in worship and return to another dirty place later. It carries impurity wherever it goes. The fly is attracted not only to what is beautiful but also to what is filthy.

Many human minds behave like the fly. A person may say, 'My children are loving, my friends support me, my work is going well, but my mother-in-law is difficult,' and then the whole mind is occupied with that one negative aspect.

When you constantly focus on what is wrong, your energy is drained. You become a prisoner of your own thoughts. Negativity becomes a habit, and gradually you lose the ability to appreciate blessings that surround you. This is the fly mentality. It keeps moving from one complaint to another, from one criticism to another, from one wound to another.

THE SPEAKING TREE

The bee mentality is different. A bee does not deny the existence of dirt, but it chooses to seek nectar. Similarly, a wise person does not ignore problems but focuses on possibilities. Even when an unhappy incident occurs, the bee-like mind asks, 'What can i learn from this experience? How can this challenge help me grow?'

Every experience in life can become a teacher if you are willing to learn. Failures can teach humility. Criticism can teach self-awareness. Difficult people can teach patience. Losses can teach detachment. If you learn the lesson, even painful experiences become stepping stones for growth.

A positive mind is not a mind that denies reality. It is a mind that chooses a constructive response. It is a mind that appreciates, learns, grows and moves forward. Such a mind attracts blessings naturally. When your mind becomes receptive, gratitude replaces complaints, wisdom replaces confusion, and peace replaces restlessness.

Therefore, i invite you to examine your own mind. Are you behaving like a bee or like a fly? Do you spend your time appreciating the good in people, or do you constantly search for faults? Do you learn from challenges, or do you become *trapped* in them? The answer to these questions will determine the quality of your life.

Let us cultivate the bee's attitude. Let us search for goodness, beauty, wisdom and opportunities in every situation. When we develop such a mindset, we discover that positivity is not merely a way of thinking, it is a way of living.

Swamiji will conduct Guru Purnima Celebration online on July 29, 6.30-8am, support@prasannatrust.com

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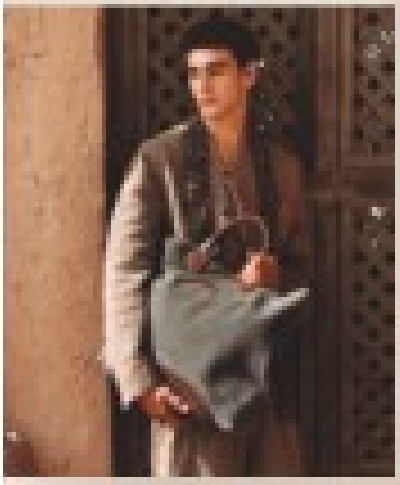

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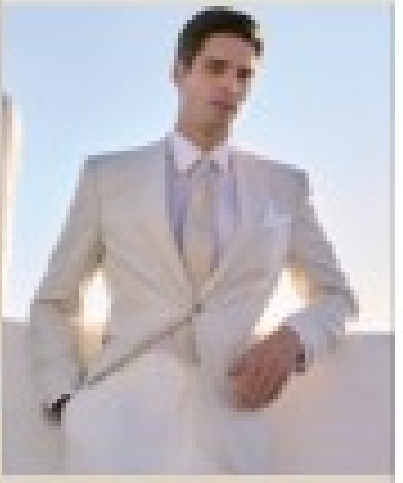

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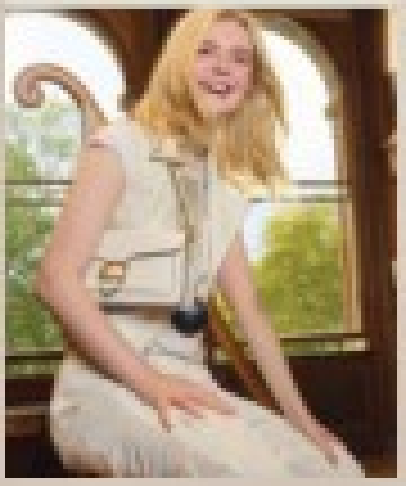

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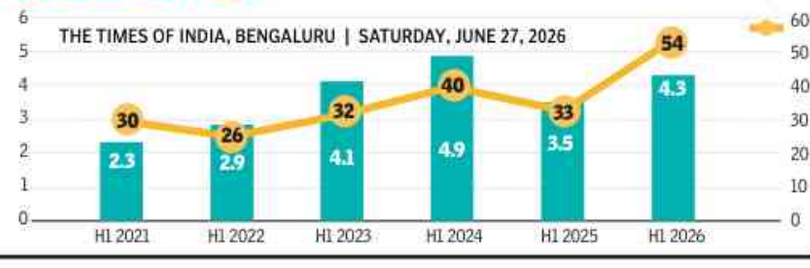
TIMES BUSINESS

THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | SATURDAY, JUNE 27, 2026

Institutional real estate investment surges 23%

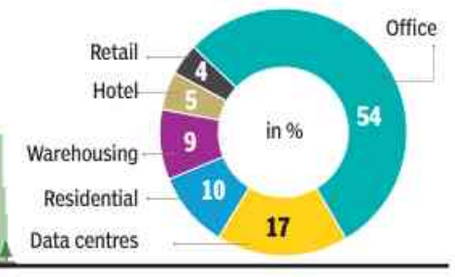
India's institutional real estate market demonstrated remarkable resilience in the first half of 2026 (Jan-June 2026), with total capital flows estimated to reach $4.3 billion across a record 54 transactions. This represents a 23% increase over H1 2025, according to JLL

Source: JLL Research



Total of 54 deals signal sustained institutional commitment in H1 2026

Office sector captures dominant share in institutional portfolios



Lenders seek 30% stake in Aakash to settle Byju's case

Mumbai: Byju's global lenders are in talks to take a roughly 30% stake in one of its partly-owned education firms and drop all legal action against the company's founder Byju Raveendran, two sources with direct knowledge said.

US-based Glas Trust, trustee for a group of lenders, accused Raveendran of mismanagement and demanded $1 billion in unpaid loans after Byju's filed for bankruptcy in India in 2024. The legal dispute, which spans courts in India, Singapore and the United States, has been raging since Byju's bankruptcy. The two sources, who declined to be named as the talks are private, said that the lenders are in the advanced stages of settling the dispute and are likely to take a roughly 30% stake in Aakash Educational Services, a popular offline coaching institute. REUTERS

'IT cos are generating $10-12bn in AI revenue'

New Delhi: India's IT industry is generating an estimated $10-12 billion in revenue from AI services, with nearly a quarter of companies successfully moving AI experiments into production, industry body Nasscom said. Looking ahead, it said Agentic AI will open up an additional $300-400 billion in addressable spend pools. AGENCIES

Forex reserves rise $963mn to $673bn

Mumbai: India's forex reserves increased by $963 million to $673 billion during the week ended June 19, RBI said on Friday. In the previous reporting week, the overall reserves had dropped by $10 billion. Foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, decreased by $3 billion to $541 billion in the week ended June 19. The value of gold reserves increased by $4 billion to $107.9 billion. AGENCIES

Anti-dumping probe into steel items

New Delhi: Govt has initiated an anti-dumping probe against cheap imports of certain hot rolled steel goods. The probe followed an application for the same by JSW Steel, JSW Vijaynagar Metallics and Jindal Steel Odisha. The applicants had alleged that 'hot rolled flat products' exported from China, Japan and Russia are being imported at dumped prices, which is causing material injury to the domestic industry. TNN

HDFC review finds no evidence backing ex-chairman's charges

'No Record of Chakraborty Flagging Ethics Issues, Dubai Case'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: HDFC Bank said that claims made by former chairman Atanu Chakraborty in his resignation letter, and subsequent remarks about the bank going against his ethics and values, were not substantiated by the bank's records.

"The minutes of the meetings Mr. Chakraborty attended were a product of a comprehensive drafting, review and approval process that afforded Mr. Chakraborty an opportunity to record any 'happenings and practices' that purportedly were not in congruence with his personal values and ethics. No contemporaneous support for Mr. Chakraborty's statement was found in the Board or Board Committee minutes or materials reviewed, or in contemporaneous communications about the review and approval of the minutes of meetings he attended," the bank said in a statement to the exchanges.

LAW FIRMS SEE NO SUBSTANCE

> "Certain happenings and practices within the bank, that I have observed over last two years, are not in congruence with my personal values and ethics. This is the basis of my aforementioned decision
> —Atanu Chakraborty in resignation letter

> "No contemporaneous support for Mr. Chakraborty's statement was found in the Board or Board committee minutes or materials reviewed, or in contemporaneous communications about the review and approval of the minutes of meetings he attended
> —HDFC Bank's external review report

The review was conducted by law firms Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati, PC and Wadia Ghandy & Co. After reviewing the agenda and minutes pertaining to board meetings, conducting interviews with directors and senior management, and examining documents and information, the firms concluded that if these ethical conflicts existed, Chakraborty did not record them, dissent to them, or communicate them through official board channels during the two-year reference period, even though he had the opportunity. The legal review was conducted over a three-month period, and the terms of reference issued on March 24, defined the relevant time period as the two years preceding Chakraborty's resignation.

The bank also referred to the issue of AT1 bonds, which saw allegations of mis-selling, but did not elaborate on those allegations. The bank has maintained that there was no mis-selling and said that the only reason it had fallen foul of regulators was the failure to re-onboard customers from another jurisdiction within the UAE. "Although Mr. Chakraborty referred to the Dubai matter in post-resignation public statements, no contemporaneous evidence was identified reflecting that he raised any concerns about his personal values and ethics, or that he disagreed with any decisions made by the Board or relevant Board Committees in connection with the Dubai matter," the bank said. Dubai authorities had issued a formal restriction against HDFC Bank in Sept 2025. The Dubai Financial Services Authority (DFSA) barred the bank's Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) branch from onboarding new clients.

Make use of FTAs, other schemes to boost shipments, govt tells biz

Sidhartha@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Govt has asked businesses to make use of the free trade agreements (FTAs) and schemes beyond interest subsidy, which are part of the Export Promotion Mission to boost shipments from the country.

Commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal had met export promotion councils (EPCs) this week to take stock of the progress made towards meeting the targets set for them and also the medium-term strategy that they are adopting for sectoral exports.

The emphasis on FTAs comes, amid a flurry of trade deals, with the India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement due to be implemented from July 15. There is significant emphasis from govt on ensuring significant utilisation of the benefits.

One of the concerns is that Indian industry, which has traditionally been domestic focused, may not have created adequate capacity in sectors, such as textiles, to take advantage of the duty concessions that are part of the FTAs.

TAKING STOCK

- Commerce and industry minister **Piyush Goyal** met export promotion councils this week to take a look at progress towards targets set for them
- He also took stock of medium-term strategy for various sectors
- Govt is concerned over capacity of sectors, such as textiles, to take advantage of duty concessions

For instance, the UK deal and the one with the European Union, which is likely to kick in from the year-end, will see tariffs being removed on several labour-intensive sectors, such as textiles and footwear, helping them compete with products from Bangladesh and other countries that enjoy zero tariffs.

Indian textiles units, including some of the biggest players, are too fragmented and often are seen to be lacking capacity to meet the demand. Besides, most of them are concentrated on cotton.

Similarly, when it comes to Export Promotion Mission, EPC officials pointed out that domestic units have focused largely on using the benefits of interest subsidy, ignoring other elements, as some of them are too cumbersome to use or do not factor in the requirements of the industry.

The commerce department is keen to ensure that the funds allocated to the scheme are fully utilised, including for promotional activities and other facilities.

Govt is keen to ensure that Indian exports, goods and services, reach the $1 trillion mark this year, as against $860 billion last year given the 15%-plus growth seen during the first 10 weeks of the fiscal. While a part of it is aided by higher commodity prices, especially crude, the Centre is expecting the FTAs to provide a boost.

Exporters raise concerns over revised Fema rules

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Exporters have flagged at least half-a-dozen concerns on the revision in Fema rules that come into effect later this year, with the Reserve Bank of India considering several of the proposals favourably, industry executives said.

RBI governor Sanjay Malhotra had met industry bodies on Thursday. Federation of Indian Export Organisations (Fieo) has flagged concerns over a fall in priority sector export credit, which was down 14% by Feb despite goods and services exports rising 4%. While Fieo and other industry bodies have raised credit flow as a major concern, particularly due to liquidity issues, banks have not responded positively. There have been demands for RBI to push for timely pre- and post-shipment credit at competitive rates along with better the transmission of interest equalisation benefits.

One of the concerns around Foreign Exchange Management Act (Fema) rules relates to a provision mandating exporters to undertake exports only against receipt of full advance or receipt of irrevocable Letter of Credit if export proceeds of an exporter remain unrealised for a period beyond one year from the due date of realisation or extended period.

Export bodies have argued that this will hurt exporters dealing with multiple buyers and instead proposed that the restriction should be specifically linked to the defaulting buyer and not applied across all buyers. Industry players said that RBI has responded positively.

There are also suggestions to align merchanting trade transactions related to "restricted or prohibited exports" that do not touch Indian shores and involve other countries. Exporters said they face challenges regularising trade data on the EDPMS platforms that face sanctions as banks decline to process these bills due to commercial risks, leaving unregularised shipping bills outstanding and have called for a review.

Don't celebrate 5-10% export growth: Goyal

London: Commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal on Friday urged Indian businesses to move beyond the mindset of celebrating modest export growth, warning that incremental gains will not be enough to achieve India's global trade ambitions.

Addressing a Business Plenary Session in London, Goyal said Indian exporters must avoid becoming complacent with annual growth rates of 5 to 10%, arguing that such performance merely matches global trade expansion and does not reflect India's true potential. "Very often, in our cosy comfort, we lose track, and we get into the typical rut of claiming success when we have 5–7–10% growth," Goyal said. AGENCIES

Goldman, EY upbeat on India growth on lower crude prices

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Goldman Sachs and EY on Friday said that the easing of West Asia crisis and lower energy prices will be positive for the Indian economy, supporting growth, easing inflationary pressure and helping rein in fertiliser subsidy, which was seen to be double the budgeted level.

"...with the recent downward revision in the oil price forecast... we raise our real GDP growth forecast for CY2026 by 0.3 percentage point to 6.8% yoy, lower our headline inflation forecast by 0.2pp to 4.4% yoy and lower our current account deficit forecast by 0.2pp to 1.1% of GDP," Goldman Sachs economics research team said in a note. EY pegged GDP growth in 2026-27 at 6.6-6.8%. "Considering the recent geopolitical developments, if global crude prices settle at relatively lower levels and shipments through the Strait of Hormuz normalise, the positive momentum of India's growth prospects is likely to be restored," it said.

Several agencies, including RBI, had lowered the growth projection due to the war in West Asia, which hurt supplies, put pressure on prices and the Centre's fiscal health and was expected to hurt consumption. EY estimated that the Centre's fiscal deficit will be around 4.4% of GDP, against the budgeted level of 4.3%, while inflation will be around 4.5%.

Goldman Sachs said that consumption will take some hit in the June and Sept quarters due to oil price hikes implemented earlier. "Lower crude oil prices have also been accompanied by a decline in petrochemical product prices. Although the earlier increases in polymer prices are still likely to lift core goods inflation in the near term, we now expect the impact to be limited (vs. our earlier expectations), with a lower likelihood of incremental price increases across the core goods basket," it said.

Stocks edge up after choppy tech week

US stocks edged higher as dip buyers stepped in after a tumultuous week for chipmakers. Oil prices tumbled with more ships crossing through the Strait of Hormuz.

Microsoft and Amazon rebounded from losses in the previous session, helping the S&P 500 climb on Friday. There's still a sense of anxiety about whether the vast investments in artificial intelligence will justify the industry's hefty valuations. A gauge of semiconductor shares — which is set for its best-ever quarter — sank 4.2% Friday.

Oil extended this week's decline, with West Texas Intermediate falling to around $69. Oman has told European officials that a return to the pre-war arrangements governing the Strait of Hormuz is unlikely. Gold climbed above $4,000 an ounce, but was still on track for a fourth straight weekly decline, the longest losing streak since Aug 2023. REUTERS

AI JITTERS RETURN

Global Index	% Change
Kospi (KR)	-5.8
Nikkei 225 (JP)	-4.2
Hang Seng (HK)	-1.8
Dax (DE)	-1.3
FTSE 100 (UK)	-0.2
Sensex (IN)	0.1
Nifty 50 (IN)	0.1
Dow Jones (US)	0.1
Nasdaq Comp (US)	0.2
S&P 500 (US)	0.2

Data as of 2230 IST; Source: Bloomberg

AI's newest apprentices: Directors in boardrooms

AI Becomes Standing Agenda Item As Boards Weigh Benefits, Costs Associated With Tech

Shilpa.Phadnis
@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Corporate boardrooms are witnessing a quiet but significant shift: directors are becoming AI's newest apprentices. The change reflects a growing recognition that AI's impact extends far beyond technology. Directors are increasingly seeking a deeper understanding of how the technology can reshape operations, improve productivity and alter competitive positioning. In many companies, AI has become a standing agenda item, with boards taking a far more active role in deciding where to deploy the technology, how quickly to move and how to manage the associated risks.

"Over the last 12-18 months, the nature of boardroom conversations around AI has changed significantly," said Mohit Joshi, CEO and managing director of Tech Mahindra. "Earlier, AI was largely viewed as a technology or innovation initiative. Today, the focus is more business-driven, centred on competitiveness, operational efficiency, customer value, risk management and long-term growth." According to Joshi, boards now want to understand how quickly AI can move from experimentation to delivering measurable business outcomes. Leadership teams and directors are becoming increasingly involved in shaping AI strategy, governance frameworks, data readiness and operating models.

The shift is visible across industries. At Happiest Minds, AI is no longer viewed as the domain of technology leaders alone. "AI was once seen as the domain of the CTO and CIO. Today, its transformative impact on markets and business models is too fundamental to be treated as an isolated technology initiative," said Joseph Anantharaju, co-chairman of Happiest Minds. "It is now firmly established as a core strategic priority at the board level." At Happiest Minds, AI has become a standing agenda item in board discussions, reflecting what Anantharaju described as the widely held view that responsible AI adoption is directly linked to long-term value creation for companies, shareholders and society at large.

The company has embedded AI into strategy reviews and capital allocation decisions. Founder and chairman Ashok Soota personally leads the company's "AI First" programme, while its generative AI business has been elevated into a dedicated business unit under the leadership of chief technology officer Sridhar Mantha. The company also assesses how each business unit and enabling function is leveraging AI to drive competitive advantage and sustained differentiation. The growing engagement of boards with AI comes as companies grapple with questions around risk, accountability and governance.

> "As the pace of AI innovation accelerates, leaders must remain agile, inquisitive and closely attuned to clients' and the market's evolving needs. The bottom line is clear: boards understand that successful enterprise AI deployment calls for urgency, but also discernment.
> **Mohit Joshi** | CEO, TECH MAHINDRA

> "AI has become a standing agenda item in our board discussions, reflecting the widely held view that responsible AI adoption is directly linked to long-term value creation for the company, its shareholders and society at large.
> **Joseph Anantharaju** | CO-CHAIRMAN, HAPPIEST MINDS

> "Boards that stay in the classroom will always be one step behind management. The ones that step forward, ask uncomfortable questions and accept that early mistakes are part of the process—those are the boards that will govern AI well.
> **Girish Paranjpe** | CHAIRMAN, MPHASIS

Mphasis chairman Girish Paranjpe said the debate over whether AI will reshape businesses is over. The real challenge is determining where to begin and how fast to move. "In my experience, the limiting factor is rarely budget or technology; it is the board's and organisation's appetite for risk," he said. A heavily regulated company may start by deploying AI in back-office functions and keeping humans firmly in the loop, while a market-first company may use AI autonomously and much closer to customers.

"Neither is wrong — what matters is that the choice fits the organisation's reality," Paranjpe said, adding that boards must make these choices consciously and take ownership of them.

As AI adoption accelerates, directors are also having to learn an entirely new vocabulary around data governance, model risks, cybersecurity and responsible deployment. Companies are increasingly organising workshops, expert briefings and strategy sessions to help boards build familiarity with the technology.

But executives argue that theoretical knowledge alone is not enough. Paranjpe believes real understanding comes only through experience. "Boards that stay in the classroom will always be one step behind management. The ones that step forward, ask uncomfortable questions and accept that early mistakes are part of the process are the boards that will govern AI well," he said.

For many boards, the immediate focus is on practical issues such as data readiness, cybersecurity and governance frameworks. Joshi said directors are setting priorities around assessing whether enterprise data is AI-ready, implementing robust protocols to counter cyber threats and updating policies to ensure the safe and responsible integration of AI into core business processes. "The emphasis is on disciplined execution, data integrity, cybersecurity and measurable business outcomes," Joshi said. "Striking the right balance between speed and sound judgment is critical."

The message emerging from corporate India is increasingly clear: AI governance can no longer be delegated. As enterprises move from experimentation to large-scale deployment, directors themselves are becoming active participants in shaping AI strategy — learning, experimenting and asking difficult questions.

Uber's Prabhjeet Singh to be OpenAI's MD in India

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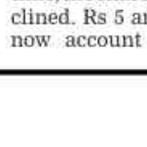
Bengaluru: OpenAI has appointed **Prabhjeet Singh**, Uber's president for India and South Asia, as its managing director for India, marking one of the company's most significant senior hires in the country as it looks to deepen its presence in one of its top priority markets.



Singh will join OpenAI in Sept and report to Kiran Mani, managing director for Asia Pacific, the company confirmed.

He will be OpenAI's most senior leader in India and will be responsible for its performance across consumer growth, enterprise adoption, partnerships, regulatory engagement and operations.

The appointment comes at a time when India is emerging as a key market for global AI companies, both because of its large consumer base and the growing interest among businesses, startups, institutions and government bodies in deploying artificial intelligence tools. Singh's mandate will include building partnerships, supporting India's wider AI ecosystem and helping more consumers, businesses, institutions and government bodies benefit from AI, OpenAI said.

Uber confirmed Singh's exit in a statement. "We thank Prabhjeet for his leadership and lasting contributions in his decade-long journey with Uber. We remain deeply committed to our next phase of growth in India," an Uber spokesperson said.

₹5 and ₹10 coins hold 53.5% value, worth ₹22,209 crore

▶ Continued from page 1

The trend is not new. RBI data show that the Re 1 coin accounted for about 42% of all coins in circulation at the end of FY14, FY15 and FY16. In FY16, around 4,500 crore Re 1 coins were in circulation.

Bankers said Re 1 coins are rarely withdrawn from circulation, which explains their continued dominance by volume.

"If one looks at the value of coins in circulation over time, the share of Re 1 has declined. Rs 5 and Rs 10 coins now account for a larger share," a bank official said.

While Rs 5 and Rs 10 together accounted for only 23.5% of the total number of coins in circulation as of June 19, 2026, they represented 53.5% of the total value, amounting to Rs 22,209 crore.

According to David Devasahayam, chairman and managing director of Radiant Cash Management Services, the Re 1 coin continues to be widely used in temples and for small-value transactions. "The coin is also used for commuting and remains prevalent, particularly in rural parts of India," he said.

Karthick Jonagadla, smallcase manager and managing director & chief executive officer of Quantace Research, said UPI has significantly reduced the need for cash in many parts of India, especially in cities and for routine payments. However, it has not eliminated the need for coins.

"The Re 1 coin survives because it solves a very basic problem: how to settle the last rupee in small cash transactions. In kirana stores, buses, roadside vendors, rural markets and informal services, cash is still common and exact change still matters," he said.

QUALIFICATION SCENARIOS
FOR GROUPS J, K, L

It's the final set of qualifiers for the Round of 32 and the teams will know what they exactly need to do to progress. There's a **fight for top spot** as well, **Leo Messi** and **Cristiano Ronaldo** both will be in action, so there's no shortage of excitement. **TOI** takes a look at scenarios

GROUP J

TEAM	M	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
Argentina	2	2	0	0	5	0	5	6
Austria	2	1	0	1	3	3	0	3
Algeria	2	1	0	1	2	4	-2	3
Jordan	2	0	0	2	2	5	-3	0

- **Argentina** have already **topped the group** while **Jordan are eliminated**. Their match is of academic interest
- **Austria** and **Algeria** play the last match of the group stage. A **draw may be enough for both** to qualify as Nos. 2 and 3.
- If there is a decisive result, **winner takes 2nd spot**

GROUP K

TEAM	M	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
Colombia	2	2	0	0	4	1	3	6
Portugal	2	1	1	0	6	1	5	4
DR Congo	2	0	1	1	1	2	-1	1
Uzbekistan	2	0	0	2	1	8	-7	0

- **Colombia can top group with draw** against Portugal
- **Portuguese have to win** against their South American rivals for top spot
- **DR Congo need to beat Uzbekistan to stay in contention** for 3rd spot while Uzbeks are already out

GROUP L

TEAM	M	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
England	2	1	1	0	4	2	2	4
Ghana	2	1	1	0	1	0	1	4
Croatia	2	1	0	1	3	4	-1	3
Panama	2	0	0	2	0	2	-2	0

- **England need to beat** already-eliminated **Panama** to top group
- If second-placed **Ghana** can manage **better GD** than England with win against Croatia, they can also be toppers
- **Luka Modric's Croatia will qualify with win** while **draw keeps them alive** for third spot

> Croatia must defend its colours as always. We are in a difficult group, but the first goal is to get through to the knockout stage
>
> **Luka Modric,** Croatian legend

FIGHT FOR A BETTER SHOT

Portugal & Colombia Battle For Top Spot To Avoid Heavyweights In The Round Of 32

AFP

WARMING UP: Cristiano Ronaldo during training in Miami

Miami: When Portugal face Colombia in their final Group K match at the World Cup, both teams will be jockeying to get a result that ensures they avoid a potential nightmare scenario in the round of 32.

While Colombia have reached the knockout stages with six points from two games, Portugal sit on four points and are all but through, but qualification is only part of the story.

Topping the group carries extra significance, with the Group K winners assured of a gentler path into the knockout rounds by facing one of the best third-placed sides while the runners-up could potentially meet England, Croatia or Ghana.

"Honestly, sometimes we do look at what situations could happen. I'd be lying if I said we didn't look at what could happen if we finished second or third," Portugal winger Pedro Neto told reporters. "But what matters most – being Portuguese, with the mentality we have – is always to be the best. So obviously we are going to face Colombia to finish first, even without knowing what may happen in the other groups."

Colombia, runners-up at the 2024 Copa America, have impressed in a campaign blending attacking flair with a resilient defence that has made them awkward opponents.

Three goals against Uzbekistan set the tone and a narrow victory over Democratic Republic of Congo underlined their patience when facing stubborn opposition.

Portugal's path has been bumpier. They drew criticism after managing just one shot on target despite completing 740 passes in a frustrating stalemate with DRC, before bouncing back with a 5-0 demolition of Uzbekistan. As the doubts dissolved into celebration, the rout also ended all-time top scorer Cristiano Ronaldo's 10-game goal drought at major tournaments as the 41-year-old netted twice.

With Lionel Messi, Kylian Mbappe, Vinicius Jr and Erling Haaland banging in goals in the race for the Golden Boot, Ronaldo was under pressure to deliver at his sixth World Cup.

While Portugal boast one of the tournament's most complete squads on paper, Colombia's physicality, counter-attacking pace and defensive organisation present a far sterner test than Uzbekistan.

A draw will suffice for Colombia to claim top spot, putting the onus on Portugal to seize control in Miami's stifling conditions, where temperatures are expected to hit 87 degrees Fahrenheit (30.5° Celsius) at kickoff.

"Our mentality is to finish first and that's what we're going into the match to do: play a great match and finish in first place," Neto added. REUTERS

Group K
PORTUGAL VS COLOMBIA
DR CONGO VS UZBEKISTAN
5 am (Sunday) Live on Zee5 and Unite8 Sports

CROATIA, GHANA SEEK SAFE PATH TO NEXT ROUND

Philadelphia: Croatia and Ghana go into Saturday's final Group L game with their World Cup destiny in their own hands when a draw could send both sides into the round of 32 and a high-scoring match is unlikely. Ghana are second in the group, level on four points with leaders England. Croatia are one point behind in third, knowing they cannot finish any lower having beaten bottom side Panama who have yet to earn a point. Croatia are aware, however, that three points, and matched with a negative goal difference, may not be enough to earn one of the eight best third-placed berths in the knockout round, and will not be leaving anything to chance.

Both recorded 1-0 wins over Panama, but while Croatia opened with a 4-2 loss to England, Ghana held the group leaders to a scoreless draw to leave themselves in pole position to advance. REUTERS

ENGLAND'S JAMES DOUBTFUL FOR PANAMA TIE

Kansas City: England defender Reece James missed training on Friday ahead of his side's World Cup game against Panama, with the Football Association saying he was following his own programme as he continues to manage a hamstring injury.

The 26-year-old right-back picked up a hamstring injury during Tuesday's goalless draw with Ghana, leaving his availability for their final group game at New York New Jersey Stadium on Saturday unclear. James has been a key figure under manager Thomas Tuchel and has started both of England's World Cup matches so far. REUTERS

Group L
CROATIA VS GHANA
PANAMA VS ENGLAND
2:30 am (Sunday) Live on Zee5 and Unite8 Sports

Despite goal race, Argentina likely to rest Messi

MESSI

Kansas City: Argentina head into their final Group J match against Jordan on Saturday with one eye already on the knockout stage, while their rivals will be eager to sign off their first World Cup campaign on a positive note in what is effectively a dead rubber. The South Americans have secured top spot in the group and a place in the round of 32 after beating Algeria 3-0 and Austria 2-0, with Lionel Messi scoring all five of their goals.

Before facing the Group H runners-up in Miami on July 3, Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni is expected to rotate his squad against Jordan. Messi himself could be rested, with Nico Paz in line to step in for the talisman, who turned 39 on Wednesday and had recently recovered from a muscle strain.

"The idea is to give most players a chance to play. I think they deserve it and, whenever the match allows it, we will do so," Scaloni told reporters.

Players returning from recent injuries – including striker Julian Alvarez, left back Nicolas Tagliafico and midfielder Leandro Paredes – may get increased minutes. "I didn't arrive in the best shape to play the friendlies, but I feel very good now. Supporting the team and filling the role that was given to me," said Alvarez, who came on as a substitute in the first two matches.

Defender Cristian Romero is likely to miss out after being forced off with an injury in the win over Austria, with veteran Nicolas Otamendi expected to replace him. Argentina's defence has yet to face a significant test, and uncertainties in the sector remain. Jordan, making their tournament debut, were eliminated following a 3-1 defeat by Austria and a 2-1 loss to Algeria, but coach Jamal Sellami said the clash against the defending champions would be an opportunity for his side to leave a great mark.

Sellami said his players' inexperience may have cost them in the defeat by Algeria, but that he was proud of their World Cup campaign despite the early exit. REUTERS

Group J
ARGENTINA VS JORDAN
ALGERIA VS AUSTRIA
7:30 am (Sunday) Live on Zee5 and Unite8 Sports

SNAP SHOTS

India vs Indonesia in semis

Hosts India will take on Indonesia in the semifinals of the AVC Cup men's volleyball tournament in Ahmedabad on Saturday. On Thursday, the Indian team shocked Australia 3-0 to top Pool B with an unbeaten run after five matches.

Serena to face 20-year-old Maya: Serena Williams will face 20-year-old Maya Joint of Australia in the first round at Wimbledon for her first singles match in nearly four years. No. 1 Jannik Sinner, the defending singles champion, is the top-seeded men's player. Sabalenka is the women's top seed.

Antonelli fastest: Formula One championship leader Kimi Antonelli was fastest in Friday practice for the Austrian Grand Prix. The 19-year-old Italian was 0.04s quicker than teammate George Russell in session one and then 0.237 faster than McLaren's Oscar Piastri in the second.

Rounak shocks Chen: Rounak Chouhan shocked top seed Chou Tien Chen of Chinese Taipei 21-17, 26-24 at the US Open in Fullerton, USA. Tanvi Sharma defeated Tung Ciou-Tong of Chinese Taipei 21-12, 21-19, Rakshitha Sree got past Chen Su Yu 21-4, 21-19 while Devika Sihag beat Tonrug Saeheng of Thailand 21-17, 21-19. Kidambi Srikanth scored a 21-14, 21-13 win over Lee Zi Jia of Malaysia.

England fight back: England roared back into contention on the second day of the third and deciding test against New Zealand with Ben Duckett's rapid century helping his side to 223-2. **Brief scores: NZ (o/n 361/4) 438 in 114.5 overs** (Latham 151, Conway 157; Stokes 4-70) vs **England 223/2 in 45 overs** (Duckett 113, Bethell 74).

De Silva rescues Sri Lanka: Dhananjaya de Silva's assured 13th Test hundred helped Sri Lanka to 308 on the first day of the first Test against the West Indies in Antigua on Thursday. **Brief scores: SL 308 in 71.5 overs** (Dhananjaya 120, Chandimal 54; Greaves 3-39) vs **West Indies**.

Jurel powers India 'A': Dhruv Jurel's unbeaten 141 propelled India 'A' to 452/6 declared in the first innings of their four-day match against Sri Lanka 'A' in Galle on Friday. **Brief scores: India 'A' 452/6d** (Sudharsan 132, Jurel 141 no.o; Gunasekara 3-84) vs **SL 'A' 113/2** (Fernando 65 batting).

Rangers, Gowthama in semis

Bengaluru: Rangers FC defeated Freedom FC 2-0 in the quarterfinals of the BDFA 'C' Division League here on Friday.

After a goalless first half, Rangers scored twice after changing ends to advance to the semis. Jude Abishek Satish opened the scoring in the 43rd minute. He weaved past a few Freedom players before coming up with a neat finish. Five minutes later, Avinash Suresh doubled Rangers' lead with a brilliant free kick that beat the wall and sailed in.

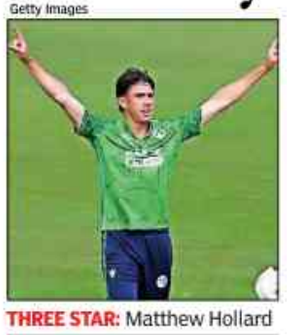
Freedom tried their best to mount a fightback, but their attacks were met with a strong challenge. The Rangers defence, comprising Shawn Sebastian, Pranav S, and Ratnasila Dewan, stood firm to help their side.

In another last-eight match, Gowthama FC edged Rovers FC 1-0. Deepak R scored the winner in the 26th minute.

Results (quarterfinals): Gowthama FC 1 (Deepak R 26) bt Rovers FC 0; Rangers FC 2 (Jude Abishek Satish 43, Avinash Suresh 48) bt Freedom FC 0. TNN — **Hridya S**

Ireland stun India for historic victory

Getty Images



THREE STAR: Matthew Hollard

Belfast: Immaculate Ireland bowlers gnawed on Indian batters' impatience on a rather pacy pitch with exemplary lengths, etching a historic 34-run victory in the first T20I match here on Friday. It was Ireland's first-ever victory over reigning T20 world champions India in any format, and the hosts have now taken a 1-0 lead in the two-match series.

Chasing 183 on a pitch that had enough assistance for quick bowlers was not improbable but needed a different, pragmatic approach after powerplay.

But none of them had the patience, as India ended up at 148 all out, despite Abhishek Sharma making a 20-ball 50.

T20I SERIES

Debutant pacer Jai Moondra (2/26) inflicted the first blow on his country of origin, eliciting an inside on to the stumps from Sanju Samson.

The Irish bowlers continued to pull the length back as Indians perished with alarming regularity.

Ishan Kishan went for a trademark hack to leg-side off Matt Hollard (3/28) and Lorcan Tucker completed a simple catch inside the circle. In his first match as India's full-time T20 skipper, Shreyas Iyer attempted a flick off Hollard but could not impart force or distance to the pace-off delivery, getting caught in the deep by George Dockrell. India scored 68 in the powerplay but had lost three wickets. However, Abhishek played a gem, a 20-ball fifty, as wickets tumbled around him, and punished pacer Liam McCarthy for four boundaries in the third over as India breezed ahead.

But the left-hander found Ben Calitz with surgical precision through a pull off McCarthy, bringing a smile to Ireland players' faces. Those smiles only widened once Tilak Varma and Shivam Dube went without making much of an impact. The final nail was thudded on India's coffin when Arshdeep Singh fell to Matthew Humphreys, leaving the Irish camp in a joyous huddle.

Earlier, Indian pacers stuck to hard lengths and preyed on the aggressive tendencies of Ireland batters, limiting them to 182/9.

Brief scores: Ireland: 182/9 in 20 overs (Lorcan Tucker 50; Gareth Delany 49; Arshdeep Singh 2-28, Harshit Rana 3-24, Axar Patel 2-33) bt **India: 148 all out in 18.5 overs** (Abhishek Sharma 49, Shivam Dube 25; Matthew Humphreys 3-38, Jai Moondra 2-25, Matt Hollard 3-28). PTI

Karnataka women win relay gold

The Karnataka women's relay team, comprising Prakruthi Rao, Daneshwari T, V Sudheeksha and Unnathi Bollanda, won the gold in the 4x100m event at the National inter- state senior athletics championships in Bhubaneswar on Friday, reports **Arnab Seal**. The quartet clocked 44.75s to beat the challenge from Tamil Nadu (45.07) and Maharashtra (46.21), who bagged the second and third places respectively.

In the men's 110m hurdles, Karnataka's Krishik M

ATHLETICS

claimed the bronze, clocking 13.69s. National record holder Tejas Shirse of Maharashtra took the gold and dipped under the Asiad qualifying mark, clocking 13.61s. Manav R of Tamil Nadu came second in 13.66s. Both Manav and Krishik missed the Asiad mark of 13.63s.

Chithravel clears AG mark

Praveen Chithravel won the men's triple jump. Chithravel qualified for the Asian Games too with a best leap of 16.92m, achieved in his very first attempt. Karthik U and Selva Prabhu finished second and third respectively with leaps of 16.8m and 16.79m and also made the cut.

Earlier, Tejas Shirse won the men's 110m hurdles in 13.61s after the race finally got underway following three false starts. TNN

Catching woes hit India's campaign

Four Dropped Catches Inside The Powerplay Against B'desh Extended A Worrying Trend For Harmanpreet Kaur's Side

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AP

SLOPPY EFFORT: Nandani Sharma

In the fifth over of Bangladesh's innings in Manchester on Thursday, Nandani Sharma spilled a top edge from Juairiya Ferdous at short third. The television cameras immediately panned to India head coach Amol Muzumdar. The disbelief on his face said it all. How do you explain four dropped catches inside the first five overs of a Women's T20 World Cup match?

T20 WORLD CUP

That, however, has been India's recurring problem in England. Through four matches, they have put down 11 catches, a worrying trend that threatens to derail their campaign. The lapses proved costly against South Africa, where Marizanne Kapp, dropped on nine, was reprieved twice more before making an unbeaten 81 and steering her side to victory. After South Africa's emphatic 88-run win over the Netherlands, India's semifinal hopes remain delicately poised.

After India's five-wicket win over Bangladesh, captain Harmanpreet Kaur admitted the missed opportunities were a concern. "We've worked on our fielding but we dropped catches. They're our best fielders but sometimes it happens. We just have to keep working and catch the balls. We've fumbled but hope to be at our best next game," she said.

Radha Yadav, regarded as one of India's finest fielders despite enduring a difficult tournament under the high ball, acknowledged the errors after returning figures of 3/28. "Fielding is something we do with great enthusiasm. You will always see it in our fielding sessions; we don't leave a single catch there. It's very rare, maybe in extremely tough cases," she said.

Radha admitted that conditions against Bangladesh made catching difficult, although she stopped short of using them as an excuse. "It's not really an excuse, but it was a bit difficult because of the sun. It was very difficult for those fielding on one side. Sometimes conditions also matter and how you are feeling that day."

With Sunday's must-win clash against Australia looming, Radha stressed the need to move on quickly rather than dwell on the mistakes. "Everyone is working hard. No one is just showing up on the ground. Everyone ticks all the boxes. That's always been our mantra: fitness, bowling, batting and fielding. We do all those things. But sometimes there's a day when it just doesn't happen. You can only learn from it. There's no point breaking your head over it," Radha said.

MYSURU, MNKRP TRIUMPH

Chethan Shivakumar

CHAMPIONS: Mysuru 'A' girls celebrate

Bengaluru: Mysuru 'A' and hosts MNK Rao Park Basketball Club emerged champions in the girls' and boys' categories, respectively, at the State youth basketball championship here on Thursday evening.

The girls' title contest saw an intense battle between Mysuru and Beagles Basketball Club. From the whistle, Mysuru put up a masterclass in defence and aggressive tackling. Led by Risha, whose impressive shooting repeatedly dismantled the opposition's attacks.

Mysuru built an early lead, but Beagles BC fought back with speed and smart tactics, sparked by Saanvi's lethal three-point shooting. Despite a late 11-point fourth-quarter surge from the Beagles and tactical adjustments across more than five time-outs called by both benches, Mysuru's defensive stranglehold proved insurmountable as they prevailed 45-29.

With the crowd and momentum on their side, hosts MNK Rao Park BC boys delivered a dominant performance to defeat Southern Blues 50-18 and claim the title. **Results: Boys: Final:** MNK Rao Park BC 50 (Ujwal 15, Dev Naidu 14) bt Southern Blues 18 (Trinabh 13) HT: 32-11; **Third place play-off:** AVBC 75 (Ayaan Ali 18, Aryan 17) bt Vimanapura SC 33 (Aditya 18) HT: **35-20. Girls: Final:** Mysuru A 45 (Aanchal 16) bt Beagles BC 29 (Saanvi 9) HT: 27-14; **Third place play-off:** Vivek's SC 44 (Manasvi 16, Linisha 11) bt Bangalore Vanguards 36 (Charvya 15) HT: 22-14. TNN

—**Saanya Sharma P**

Iron Mirage for Cama Million

Bengaluru: Iron Mirage appeals most in the SM Cama Music Million at the summer races here on Saturday. The first race starts at 2 pm.

1. The Smart Chieftan Plate 1400M: Ashwa New York 1, Rampage 2. **2. The Poonawalla Stud Plate (Div II) 1200M:** Basilica 1, La McQueen 2. **3. The Astronomic Plate 2000M:** Maana 1, Youremanorborne 2. **4. The Managing**

HORSE RACING

Committee Gold Cup 1600M: Superstar 1, Xanthe 2. **5. The SM Cama Music and Production Pvt Ltd Juvenile Sprinters' Million (Grade III) 1200M:** Iron Mirage 1, Burevestnik 2. **6. The Malakpet Plate 1300M:** Shining Ways 1, Annabelle 2. **7. The Poonawalla Stud Plate (Div I) 1200M:** Senor Cherie 1, Aqustic 2. **Day's best:** Maana **Jackpot:** 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7 **Mini Jackpot:** 4, 5, 6 & 7 **First Treble:** 2, 3 & 4 **Second Treble:** 5, 6 & 7. TNN

Praneeth powers Century

Bengaluru: Century Cricketers registered a ten-wicket victory against Merchants Cricket Club in the KSCA U-19 inter-club cricket tournament recently. Chilukuri Praneeth, who scalped six wickets, played an integral role in the win.

Merchants' decision to bat backfired with the team losing four wickets for two runs inside three overs with medium pacer Praneeth running riot with the new ball. They were eventually bundled out for 91 in 21.2 overs. In reply, Century opener and captain Siddharth TNV led from the front with an unbeaten 31-ball 59 (9x4, 2x6) to see his team home in 7.3 overs.

Brief scores: Merchants CC (1): 91 all out in 21.2 overs (Vishruth S 25, Roger Aranha 26; Chilukuri Praneeth 6-26) lost to **Century Cricketers: 93 for no loss in 7.3 overs** (Siddharth TNV 59 n.o).

City Gymkhana: 279/7 in 50 overs (Arsh Arora 28, Barath C 84, Vedaraj Yadav 76; Vaibhav C 3-50, Sujith 2-51) lost to **Vijaya CC: 280/6 in 48.2 overs** (Aadharsh SJ 114 (95b, 17 x 4), Dhruv Krishnan 41, Udgeet Nandan 40; Nihal H 2-55, Siddharth Smaran 2-39). **YMCA CC (3): 188 all out in 44.3 overs** (Debraj Nandi 36, Monish S 27, Ram Reddy 27, Samarth P 26; Tanveer Sab 2-32, Akshay Sastry 4-41, Arhaan Khan 2-12) lost to **National Cricketers: 189/6 in 38.1 overs** (Mohammed Khan 51, Milind Dutta 66, Chandan R 27, Sriram V 27; Tanay Jabin 2-32, Debraj Nandi 2-38). **Sir Syed Cricketers: 194 all out in 49.2 overs** (Kumar Krishna 30, Aaryansinh Chavda 48, Arjun Balu 32 n.o, Sai Reddy 2-43, Krishna Sreekar 2-16) bt **City Cricketers (2): 122 all out in 30.5 overs** (Priyanshu Gaharwar 27; Vivek NP 2-24, Aarav Singh 3-7). **Dooravani Cricketers (1): 334/7 in 50 overs** (Sri Chollangi 29, Arvind Prajwal 31, Prajjval Srivastava 60, Aditya Shahapurkar 77, Dhruv Acharya 74 n.o, S Gaaurav 33 n.o; Hema Chandra 2-48, Purnith Raj 2-46) bt **Jolly Cricketers: 70 all out in 19.5 overs** (Prasad Kumar 4-10, Mohammed Shamsheer 5-28).

Chintamani SA: 234 all out in 47.3 overs (Arjun Potti 61, Vijay Bandi 37, Pradyumna AN 59, Kevin Dubal 5-40, Lohith Ambarisha 3-44) bt **Vivekanagar Cricketers: 126 all out in 35.3 overs** (Ankur Poonia 26, Prajeeth Shetty 56 , Harshith Suresh 3-30, Shreehaan Arinjai 4-26, Preetham Sunkapur 2-12).

Jawans CC: 348/4 in 50 overs (Arya Gowda 69, Nitish Arya 139 (122b, 16x4, 2x6), Talha Sheriff 82; Aarav Kapoor 2-41) bt **Yankees CC: 134 all out in 30.3 overs** (Ayaan Thakur 26; Arya Gowda 4-35, Arjun Ramesh 5-39). **Swastic Union CC (2) : 397 for 4 in 50 overs** (Shiv R 141 (114b, 20 x 4, 5 x 6), K Akhil 170 n.o (141 balls, 27 x 4) bt **Mathikere CC : 190/7 in 36.5 overs** (Mahith Bandi 44, Rafa Poonacha Ballachanda 90; Dhakshath P 2-32, Anirudh Deepak 3-55). (Match interrupted due to rain, no further play possible) **Cambridge CC: 210 all out in 41.5 overs** (Arnav Anil 90, Nithin R 28, Nakka Vasu 27; Deeraj K 3-44, Tarun Balamurugan 2-46, Sharath Kumar S 3-32) bt **Jawahar SC (2): 152/8 in 50 overs** (Raibath Raipalli 53 n.o; Arav Prasad 5-18, Milhan Rehman 2-29). **Young Cricketers (1): 304/7 in 50 overs** (Chinmai R 46, Micheal 35, Monik R 112 (113b, 15 x 4); Abhijith Karanth 2-62, Vedant Athreya 2-42, Aarav Bajaj 2-63) bt **Bangalore United CC (1): 301/7 in 50 overs** (Yash Rajanna 64, Ashutosh Gejji 28, Adhrit Rao 121 (100b, 11x4, 1x6), Yashas HR 3-53, Aryaman Srivastava 3-55).

Bangalore Cricketers : 268 all out in 50 overs (Rishik A 46, Gagandeep Gowda 34, Daivik S 36, Pratyush Chauhan 38, Namish P 34 n.o; Nischith Prasad 2-42, R Kushal 2-38) bt **Sangam CA: 171 all out in 32.3 overs** (Syed Amin 25, Suraj Bastalkar 38, Vijay Maller 4-33, Dharsh MD 2-24). TNN

India go down to England on penalties

London: The Indian men's hockey team went down 1-4 to England in a penalty shootout after the two teams were locked 2-2 in regulation time of their FIH Pro League match here.

At the Lee Valley Hockey and Tennis Centre on Thurs-

HOCKEY

day, Dilpreet Singh (10, 58) scored an impressive brace for India while David Goodfield (29) and Nicholas Bandurak (56) were on the scoresheet for England. Later in the shootout, Thomas Sorsby, James Albery and captain Zachary Wallace converted their attempts in the shootout for the hosts, besides one attempt that led to a penalty stroke, which was also scored off by Wallace. Captain Harmanpreet Singh was India's lone scorer in the shootout.

The opening goal came in the 10th minute as Mandeep Singh dribbled along the baseline and set the perfect pass for Dilpreet who slotted the ball into the goal with a diving finish to put India ahead. In the 29th minute, England got back on level terms courtesy of a field goal by Goodfield. PTI

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GOAL RUSH
11 Jun 2026 – 19 Jul 2026
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SATURDAY, JUNE 27, 2026

"WE GOT OFF TO A GREAT START. RIGHT AFTER SCORING, WE STARTED COMMITTING TACTICAL SUICIDE WITH OUR POSITIONING. BUT I ALSO CAN'T SAY THAT ANY OF MY PLAYERS DIDN'T GIVE IT THEIR ALL."

—JULIAN NAGELSMANN
GERMANY COACH

THE DRAW IS IN

When Algeria Meet Austria in Kansas, Will They Correct An Injustice Or Go With The Flow?

Dwaipayan.Datta@timesofindia.com

Will the modern World Cup's chapter of infamy repeat itself? That's what has got everyone worried as Austria prepares to take on Algeria in the last set of group games. The final Group J games will be played on Sunday, 7.30 am IST. Argentina's meeting with Jordan in Dallas will be about Lionel Scaloni trying out his reserve players in attack and midfield as the defending champions assess their options for the knockouts. While already-eliminated Jordan will play for pride, it will also be about Messi's goal count.

But when Austria and Algeria take the field in Kansas, both teams will know what the cut-off for qualification for the third-placed team is going to be. Eight best-placed third-placed teams will make the Round of 32 and by the looks of it, four points earned by the third-placed team is likely to be sufficient for qualification. In the case of, say, nine teams finding themselves with four points each, they will then be decided on goal difference.

Do bear in mind, however that, in 1994, current-day powerhouses Norway were eliminated despite sitting with four points but finding themselves bottom of their group. As things stand, Algeria and Austria sit on three points each and they will know exactly if they will need just one point to qualify as Nos. 2 and 3 teams from the group, since all the other teams would have finished their engagements. Unless there are already eight third-placed teams of the 11 earlier groups with four points each, there's no reason for Austria and Algeria — two of the three protagonists of the infamous 'Disgrace of Gijon' — to go all out in search of victory. For context, the 'Disgrace of Gijon' occured at the 1982 World Cup, a result of connivance which led FIFA to bring in the rule that the final games of a group must be played simultaneously.

In Gijon, West Germany and Austria played out a 1-0 win in favour of the four-time champions to ensure that both the teams qualify from the group. It ensured Algeria's ouster, who were on same points as the two European teams and had finished their group engagements before. Seeing what was happening, some commentators refused to talk about the match and asked viewers to switch off their TVs. A local newspaper even published the game's scoreline under the crime section.

But now, Algeria — the aggrieved party 44 years ago — sit on the cusp of a probable 'Disgrace of Kansas City,' something that world football doesn't need.

How could this situation have been avoided?

With the games in full flow now, there's not much FIFA can do about it. At best, they can threaten to sanction the teams if foul-play can be proved. That said, FIFA will have a tough time trying to show that the teams didn't give their best to force a result. Going forward, to eliminate this conundrum, there could be a 64-team field. As bloated as that will be, there will be at least 16 groups with two qualifying from each group, which avoids this tricky third-place issue.

Or simply, FIFA reverts to the tried and tested method of goal difference. Another option is to have games of all the teams in the final round at the same time. It will mean 24 matches being played at the same time, something close to the way the 32-team Champions League group-stage is being played currently.

In a World Cup situation, this could mean a logistical and organisational nightmare.

This year, the tournament is being played at 16 venues across three nations. In 2030, the hosts will be Spain, Morocco and Uruguay and FIFA will need to figure out how they will be able to carry out such a mammoth task if the matches are spread across 24 venues.

For now, the world will hope that Algeria and Austria maintain the spirit of the sport and make it grand end to a most entertaining group stage.

NO LAST-ROUND DRAMA

The last round of the group stage in a football tournament is usually the one in which things come to a head. While some teams would already have qualified by winning both their earlier games, even some of them would have to ensure they don't lose the last round lest the second placed team in the group catch up on points and beat them on goal difference. And the rest have to play with one eye on the other game in the group to know what is required to qualify.

Much of this drama has been taken away from this World Cup because of a change in the rules on tiebreakers. In earlier World Cups, if two (or more) teams finished level on points, they would first be separated by goal difference. That's been changed to make their head-to-head result the first tiebreaker. Here's where the changed rule makes a difference and where it doesn't in terms of the situation prior to the last round.

Group A	Mexico already knew they would top the group even if they lost to Czechia, since South Korea, the only team that could draw level on points had lost in their head-to-head clash
Group B	Both round 3 games mattered in deciding placements with no team having qualified
Group C	Both games mattered with Brazil topping on goal difference since their head-to-head with Morocco was a draw
Group D	USA were guaranteed top slot since they had beaten both Australia and Paraguay, the two teams that could tie with them on points. For those two teams a draw was better than risking defeat since 4 points would almost certainly mean qualification
Group E	Germany guaranteed top slot having beaten Ivory Coast, the only team that could finish level on points
Group F	Both games mattered in placements
Group G	Both games will matter in terms of final placements
Group H	Both games matter, but a draw is enough for Spain to ensure top slot unless Cabo Verde beat Saudi Arabia by four goals or more a huge margin
Group I	Both games remain relevant with the winner of France-Norway topping the group and France topping if the two draw
Group J	Argentina assured top slot having beaten both Austria and Algeria, the only teams that can match them on points. Those two meanwhile might settle for a draw that leaves them on 4 points and hence a good shot at qualifying even as third
Group K	Both games relevant with the winner of Colombia-Portugal topping and Colombia topping in case of a draw
Group L	Both games relevant with no team having assured qualification. Any of England, Ghana and Croatia can top though England have arguably the easier path. If both end in draws, chances are all three will qualify

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LET IT SINK IN: Ecuador coach Sebastian Beccacece and striker Gonzalo Plata celebrate

ECUADOR 2 (Angulo 9, Plata 77)
GERMANY 1 (Sane 2)

AFP

Ecuador stun Germany, ensure Rd of 32 slot

East Rutherford (US): A little flick of Gonzalo Plata's big toe helped Ecuador make a great escape.

Plata poked the ball past Manuel Neuer in the 77th minute and lifted Ecuador to a come-from-behind 2-1 win over Germany on Thursday and into the knockout round of the World Cup for the first time since 2006. "Life is different now," said Plata, a 25-year-old winger who scored his ninth international goal. "We suffered too much in the first two matches. We would have liked to secure qualification much earlier, but now we're going forward more hungry, knowing we have to give it our all."

Ecuador, who have lost only one of their last 22 games, finished third in Group E with four points and advanced past the group stage for the second time, headed to a possible matchup with Mexico on Tuesday in Mexico City. A four-time champion already assured of advancement by winning its first two games, Germany will play its round of 32 game Monday at Foxborough, Massachusetts, most likely against Paraguay, Australia or Sweden.

Germany went ahead on Leroy Sane's second-minute goal. Nilson Angulo equalised in the ninth minute with Ecuador's first goal of the tournament. AP

Ivorians punch ticket to first knockouts

Philadelphia: Nicolas Pepe scored twice as Ivory Coast beat Curacao 2-0 on Thursday to reach the World Cup knockout rounds for the first time ever and bring the tiny Caribbean country's run at the tournament to an end.

Pepe, now playing in Spain for Villarreal, opened the scoring for the Elephants in Philadelphia and netted again just after the hour mark.

Ivory Coast finish with six points in Group E with this victory following their opening 1-0 win over Ecuador and a 2-1 loss to Germany.

They therefore go through in second place behind Germany on head-to-head — the Germans lost 2-1 to Ecuador in New Jersey at the same time. The 2024 African champions had never previously got out of their group in three previous appearances at the World Cup, and their reward for this performance is a last-32 tie next Tuesday in Dallas.

That will be against the runners-up in Group I, which means a very tough test against either France – the country where Pepe and several other Ivorian players were born — or Norway. Curacao, with its population of barely 160,000, had already made history just by being at the World Cup, but the smallest nation ever to reach the finals go home after finishing bottom of the section without a win. REUTERS

IVORY COAST 2 (Pepe 7, 64)
CURACAO 0

WRITING HISTORY: Ivory Coast players rejoice after their maiden entry into the knockout rounds in Philadelphia on Friday

Koeman wary of Morocco threat

The Netherlands Cruise Past Tunisia To Clinch Top Spot; The Atlas Lions Await

IANS

Kansas City: Netherlands coach Ronald Koeman was taking nothing for granted after his side sealed top spot in Group F with a 3-1 win over Tunisia on Thursday, warning that next opponents Morocco would provide a formidable test in the World Cup round of 32.

The Dutch finished the group stage with seven points and 10 goals scored, but Koeman said attention had already turned to Monday's knockout clash in Monterrey, Mexico, where any thoughts of a favourable path through the tournament would be put aside.

"I'm not sure if we are the favourite in the match against Morocco," Koeman said. "We need to prepare for Morocco, because it'll be a big game. It's a good team with a lot of quality, and they can score easily." Koeman brushed aside questions of what might await beyond Morocco. "I don't think we're in a situation yet to think about that," he said. "We're going towards our real test, and that's what we're going to prepare for."

Despite their comfortable progress into the knockouts, defensive improvements remain on Koeman's agenda after his team conceded for a seventh consecutive game.

"We do pay attention to that," he said. "One or two players are not in the right position, people aren't getting blocked, and that's the sort of thing we'll discuss with the players." The coach was keen to put the issue into perspective, noting the potency of his attack.

"Getting a goal against is part of the game, and we have scored 10 goals in three games as well," he said. Koeman identified greater compactness and sharper transitions as areas where his team can still develop. "The pace, the positions, to create more, to get more people in between the lines, and without the ball, we can be more compact sometimes," he said. AFP

3 Brian Brobbey became the third player to score with each of his first three shots at the World Cup — after Hungary's Laszlo Kiss in 1982, and Colombia's Yerry Mina in 2018.

NETHERLANDS 3 (Skhiri 3 (og), Brobbey 7, Hecke 62)
TUNISIA 1 (Mastouri 54)

Isak chides Elanga for qualification confusion

Dallas: Anthony Elanga's equaliser helped Sweden qualify for the World Cup's round of 32 following a 1-1 draw with Japan, but while his teammates were celebrating the result, the striker collapsed on the ground in frustration thinking they had not qualified. Sweden finished a point below second-placed Japan in Group F, but will progress in the competition as one of the higher-ranked third-placed teams.

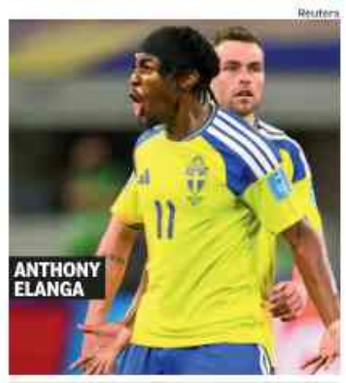
Elanga, believing they had needed a win, was pushing his teammates to find a second goal and even pulled up with cramp, earning some harsh words from his teammate Alexander Isak. "He got a little scolding from me there. He was a little frustrated at the end of the match and you can understand that now," Isak tsaid after Thursday's match.

Elanga said his teammates were trying to shout at him, but he did not know that they only needed one point to qualify until the match was over. "I just shouted, come on, we can go for more... I got cramp at the end but didn't want to stop running," he said. Elanga was not the only player unaware that they had qualified.

"I was just as clueless," said Sweden goalkeeper Jacob Widell Zetterstrom, who made his World Cup debut against Japan, and had kept the scoreline even with a diving save at the end of the first half.

Sweden coach Graham Potter could not help but smile about Elanga's confusion.

"It couldn't have been any clearer for him. He's obviously thinking about something else, bless him. I love him at the moment, but dear me," he told reporters. REUTERS



Reuters

ANTHONY ELANGA

5 Sweden have now made the knockout stages in each of their last five appearances at the World Cup.

JAPAN 1 (Maeda 56)
SWEDEN 1 (Elanga 62)

AUSTRALIA CLINCH KNOCKOUT ROUND SPOT WITH SNOOZEFEST; PARAGUAY ALSO LIKELY TO ADVANCE

Santa Clara: In a World Cup packed with drama and a record number of goals, the drabbest of draws between Paraguay and Australia on Thursday was devoid of the urgency and action synonymous with group-stage finales in the sport's showpiece event.

The Group D match had been billed as a winner-take-all encounter, but it turned out to be a cagey, stop-start affair, as two risk-averse sides seemed content to settle for a 0-0 draw likely good enough to see both through to the next round.

The point was celebrated as a win by the Australians, who sealed second spot and a place in the knockout phase for the third time. For Paraguay, the draw put them in a healthy spot to progress as one of the eight best third-place finishers at the expanded 48-team tournament.

Long before Thursday's game, co-hosts the United States had already been confirmed as group winners, while Turkey were eliminated early. In the end, it was goal difference that decided Australia would finish second and avoid a group winner in the round of 32. There were 19 attempts on goal overall, most coming from Australia, but few tested the two goalkeepers.

Both coaches chafed at suggestions from media they might have both settled for the draw. "We at no stage felt that we were playing for a draw," Australia coach Tony Popovic said. His Paraguay counterpart Gustavo Alfaro said his team defended well and found the Australians difficult to break down. REUTERS

We won't be pushovers in knockouts: Japan coach

Dallas: Brazil are one of the world's top teams but Japan will not be pushovers when the two sides meet in Houston in their World Cup last-32 clash, coach Hajime Moriyasu said on Thursday after his side finished runners-up in Group F.

Moriyasu added that a 3-2 comeback win over the Brazilians in Tokyo last October to notch their first-ever victory against the five-times champions showed Japan will go into the match on Monday looking to do more than put up a good fight.

"Last time we proved to Brazil that we aren't a pushover," Moriyasu said. "That is great progress for us. The Brazilian team is a top team in the world and we greatly respect them.

"In the match we don't know what is going to happen. We will have a chance to win as well."

Japan booked their date with Brazil after drawing 1-1 with Sweden on Thursday in Dallas as Daizen Maeda opened the scoring before Moriyasu's side conceded minutes later. The result earned Japan second place in the group behind the Netherlands.

Moriyasu said he was disappointed to concede but once the game was level he elected to bring on defensive players to preserve the point and notch second place in the group.

"We conceded a goal and in the world of football that is how it goes," he said.

Japan's result is also good for Asian football, Moriyasu said, adding that his side were representing the sporting ambition of the broader region while advancing to the knockout rounds shows the growth of football in his country.

"That is what we wanted to do from the beginning of the competition and this is proof in the growth of Japanese football," he said. All but three of Japan's current World Cup squad are based in Europe. Many play for clubs in England, Spain and Germany.

Meanwhile, Brazil legend Zico, who has played club football for Kashima Antlers in Japan, warned the five-time champions that Japan have reached a higher level of competitiveness and are ready for "whatever comes their way".

Speaking to FIFA, Zico said, "I will be supporting Brazil. But if Japan win, so be it. What I do know is that it will be a great match, because Japan play proper football." This will be only the second time that Brazil is facing Japan in a FIFA WC, with the first meeting coming in the 2006 edition of the tournament, with Brazil emerging as winners by 4-1, and Zico was Japan's manager. AGENCIES

Reuters

GET READY, BOYS: Brazil's Neymar and Douglas Santos at training ahead of their Rd of 32 clash against Japan on Monday

US lose 3-2 to Turkiye after last-gasp strike

Inglewood: A heavily changed United States lost 3-2 to Turkiye on Thursday in an action-packed dead-rubber clash that coach Mauricio Pochettino vowed would not derail the World Cup co-hosts' considerable momentum. Having gone ahead early and then clawed back an equalizer after two Turkiye goals, the US fell to a Kaan Ayhan winner deep in stoppage time.

"For you not say congratulations that we won the group, that is a little bit sad," Pochettino told reporters.

"We had other priorities. We did want to win, we wanted the victory, but there were other things that we need to balance out, and I made the very best decisions," said Pochettino, who made nine changes to his lineup ahead of the Bosnia clash.

"What does it mean to win three (group) matches if you're going to be losing the next one, and you're not going to be winning the World Cup?" he asked a notably tense and spiky press conference after the game.

TURKIYE 3 (Guler 10, Yilmaz 31, Ayhan 90)
USA 2 (Trusty 34, Berhalter 49)

Govt plans simpler import rule to cut medicine wastage

Anuja.Jaiswal@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: To cut avoidable wastage of imported medicines, Centre has proposed replacing a complex shelf-life rule with a simple requirement — drugs should have at least one year of shelf life left when they enter India.

Health ministry has issued a draft notification proposing amendments to Rule 31 of the Drugs Rules, 1945, and invited public comments. Under the proposal, most imported medicines will need to have at least 12 months of shelf life remaining at the time of import instead of complying with the existing requirement of having more than 60% of their approved shelf life left. Simply put, the current rule depends on the total shelf life of each medicine, meaning different drugs have to meet different remaining shelf-life requirements before they can be imported.

The proposed change is expected to benefit imports of a range of medicines, including certain specialised cancer medicines, treatments for rare diseases and other high-value medicines, by making the import requirement simpler and reducing avoidable wastage.

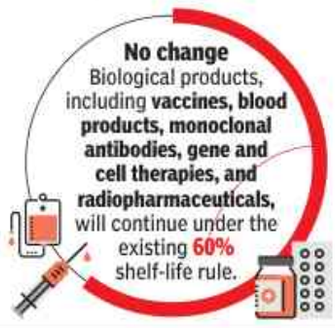
"The proposed amendment is a pragmatic step towards improving access to specialised and high-value medicines, particularly for patients with cancer and rare diseases, where delays in procurement can directly affect outcomes," said Dr Rommel Tickoo, senior director, internal medicine, Max Hospital, Saket. "Uniform minimum residual shelf-life requirement of 12 months simplifies regulatory compliance while ensuring adequate time for distribution and patient use. However, maintaining strict quality assurance, cold-chain integrity and pharmacovigilance will remain essential to ensure that easier imports do not come at the cost of patient safety," Tickoo added.

Biological products, including vaccines, blood products, monoclonal antibodies, gene and cell therapies, and radiopharmaceuticals used for PET scans and cancer treatment, however, will continue to follow the existing requirement of more than 60% of their approved shelf life remaining.

OLD RULE VS PROPOSED RULE

Current rule
Imported drugs must have more than **60% of their approved shelf life** remaining when they enter India.

Proposed rule
Imported drugs must have at **least 12 months** of shelf life remaining at the time of import.


No change
Biological products, including vaccines, blood products, monoclonal antibodies, gene and cell therapies, and radiopharmaceuticals, will continue under the existing 60% shelf-life rule.

Why it matters
- Less wastage of imported medicines
- Simpler import rule
- Better inventory management
- Improved availability of medicines
- Quality, safety and efficacy standards remain unchanged

Jackson Labs' licences cancelled

Anuja.Jaiswal
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New Delhi: The Centre has cancelled the manufacturing licences of Jackson Laboratories' units in Punjab and Himachal Pradesh after joint inspections by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) and state drug regulators found deficiencies in compliance with good manufacturing practices (GMP), as investigations continue into the Rajasthan incident in which Oxytocin injections manufactured by the company have been linked to maternal deaths.

The action follows reports from a Rajasthan govt hospital where five women died after child birth and six others reportedly developed kidney failure after receiving Oxytocin injections during C-sections on May 4. The injections were manufactured by Jackson Laboratories, though officials have said the investigation is ongoing and the exact cause of the adverse events is yet to be established and laboratory testing of drug samples and other investigations are underway.

Senior officials in the Union health ministry said a detailed report has also been sought from the Rajasthan govt to establish the facts surrounding the incident, even as regulatory authorities continue their investigation.

Patna HC raps govt over cancellation of land records

Dev Kumar Pandey

Patna: In a significant ruling with far-reaching implications for landholders across Bihar, the Patna high court has criticised the state's practice of cancelling decades-old Jamabandi entries, describing such actions as "autocratic" and contrary to settled legal principles.

Jamabandi is the revenue record through which the state recognises a landholder as a tenant for the purpose of collecting land rent. Allowing a writ petition filed by Krishna Kumar Goenka, a single bench of Justice Sourendra Pandey observed that revenue officers were "rampantly" bypassing binding judicial precedents while cancelling long-standing Jamabandi entries. The high court reiterated its consistent legal position that a Jamabandi continuing in govt revenue records for more than 30 years cannot be cancelled by revenue authorities.

TRIAL RUN OF FIRST HYDROGEN TRAIN BETWEEN SONIPAT & DELHI

PTI

India's first hydrogen-powered train successfully completed its final trial at 110 kmph between Haryana's Sonipat and Delhi, a step forward in railways' plan to introduce hydrogen-powered passenger services and reduce carbon emissions. Though the initial plan is to run this between Jind and Sonipat for proof of technology, the service is eventually likely to be extended till Delhi. An official said Friday's run was "a trial of emergency braking distance and oscillation". Railways has approved the operation of the first hydrogen fuel cell-powered train on Jind-Sonipat section of the Northern Railway in Haryana and officials claim it as the world's longest and most powerful hydrogen train on a broad-gauge network. With this, India joins countries, including Germany, Japan, China and the US, that are working on hydrogen-powered rail systems

Darted wrong, tigress dies, cubs missing; probe on

Keshav Agarwal | TNN

Pilibhit: The death of a lactating tigress shortly after being tranquilised in the buffer zone of Dudhwa Tiger Reserve has triggered scrutiny over the capture operation, with forest authorities now facing questions over missing cubs believed to have been left behind in the forest.

The tigress was darted on Tuesday in Ramnagar village under the Majhgai forest range after being lured using live bait. Officials said the animal was shifted to a cage following the tranquilisation, but her condition deteriorated soon afterwards. She vomited repeatedly before collapsing later the same evening.

While preliminary official findings attributed the death to haemorrhagic gastroenteritis and acute dehydration, several wildlife experts and veterinarians suspected complications linked to the tranquilisation procedure.

Postmortem examination findings confirmed that the tigress was lactating, indicating the presence of dependent cubs in the area. However, the cubs have not been traced so far, raising concerns over their survival in the absence of the mother. Wildlife experts warned that young cubs face risks from starvation, heat and predators without maternal protection.

The incident has led to allegations that standard operating procedures for tranquilising and handling lactating big cats may not have been followed properly.

Ostracised family carries woman's body on bicycle

Malay Ray | TNN

Rourkela: In a case of social ostracisation, the body of an 80-year-old woman was carried on a bicycle for nearly 1.5km by her family members to a crematorium in Bargarh district's Paikamal block on Thursday after villagers allegedly refused to help to carry the body for the last rites.

The deceased, Jayanti Baccha, a widow from Kantapada village had been ostracised along with her family after her younger son married outside the caste about five years ago, sources said.

TOI

Family members taking the body to the cremation ground

Jayanti, who lived with her daughter Basanti, daughter-in-law Jagyasini and grandchildren, died at home on Thursday after prolonged illness. After the villagers' refusal, the family tried to arrange a hearse vehicle but could not. Villagers reportedly objected to the body being kept for long.

Left with no option, Basanti, Jagyasini and a grandson carried the body on a bicycle to a nearby cremation ground, where they performed the last rites.

After the incident came to light, Paikamal BDO Prafulla Kumar Oddu provided Rs 3,000 assistance under the Harischandra scheme and 50kg rice to the family.

Cost spike in GE's engine hits AMCA programme

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New Delhi: India's negotiations with US's General Electric (GE) over the F414 fighter jet engine have hit a roadblock after the cost of the proposed US engine for India's Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) rose sharply, raising concerns about timelines for the country's most-ambitious fifth-generation fighter programme. "The F414 engine was initially estimated to cost around Rs 70-80 crore per unit, but GE has now quoted prices almost three times higher," a DRDO source told TOI.

Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA), nodal agency for AMCA project, requires 15 F414 engines for five flying prototypes. As ADA has frozen the airframe design of AMCA around the engine, GE knows that India's engine options for its new stealth aircraft are limited.

₹2cr compensation after doc removes healthy kidney

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Agra: In an important ruling on medical negligence, National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC) has awarded ₹2 crore in compensation to the family of an Aligarh-based woman after a surgeon mistakenly removed her healthy left kidney instead of her diseased right one. Terming the 2012 incident "one of the gravest forms of negligence" and "a medical disaster," the commission noted that the error was of the "highest order."

The bench, comprising Justice A P Sahi and member Bharatkumar Pandya, directed the operating surgeon to pay the compensation alongside ₹1 lakh in litigation costs. Furthermore, the doctor must pay 6% annual interest calculated from Feb 20, 2014—the date of the patient's demise. The total amount must be cleared within three months, failing which the interest rate will increase to 9%.

The victim, Shanti Devi, had approached the surgeon in April 2012 complaining of severe abdominal pain. Diagnostic tests, including an ultrasound and an intravenous urogram, confirmed severe hydronephrosis in her right kidney, while documenting her left kidney as completely healthy. Based on these reports, the doctor advised surgical removal of the non-functional right kidney.

Following the operation on May 6, 2012, Devi's health deteriorated. Subsequent CT scans and independent radiological evaluations conducted at other premier healthcare institutions, including AIIMS Delhi, revealed negligence. The healthy left kidney had been removed, while the diseased right kidney remained intact. Despite undergoing repeated dialysis and extensive corrective treatments, Devi succumbed to complications two years later.

Congress names hardline Dalit leader as UP incharge

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New Delhi: In a surprise move, Congress Friday named Dalit leader **Rajendra Pal Gautam** as the AICC in-charge for Uttar Pradesh by replacing Avinash Pande, who guided the party during the 2024 Lok Sabha elections that were fought in partnership with Samajwadi Party.

Congress also named Maharashtra functionary Sanjay Dutt as in-charge of Haryana and Lalji Desai as incharge of Odisha. B V Srinivas has been appointed as the head of Seva Dal.

Sources said Gautam's appointment is aimed at signaling to Dalits in Uttar Pradesh, as Congress does not have a local leader from the community. Moreover, Gautam has spent a lot of his time as Dalit activist in the state.

A senior manager argued that ally SP alone cannot attract the Dalit votes because of local social equations, and Congress activism on the Dalit front in the wake of BSP's crumbling will ultimately strengthen the alliance.

Gautam earned a name as a Dalit activist before joining the AAP and becoming a minister in the Arvind Kejriwal govt in Delhi. After a controversy triggered by BJP over a video where he was seen administering "Ambedkar's pledges" to a congregation of SCs, he had to quit the AAP govt. He later joined Congress and was named the chairman of the AICC SC department.

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